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Cugno retires: *Reflects on 38-year career*

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE PANCO

A 38-year military career has come to an end. It was a career that saw a young man voluntarily enter the military during the Vietnam War era right out of high school. It was a career that saw that young man become an officer and fight in the Vietnam War. It was a career that saw that young man leave the Army and join the National Guard. It was a career that ended with a seasoned general officer leading troops who fought, and still fight, the Global War on Terrorism.

Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general of the Connecticut National Guard, retired on May 1, a year earlier than he had planned. He was the subject of an investigation which substantiated an allegation of an inappropriate relationship which the Army disposed of with a memorandum of reprimand.

"I decided that my early retirement would be the best course of action, rather than subject my family and the Guard to prolonged controversy," said Cugno in his final column



Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno briefs several visitors at Camp Rell during TOPOFF 3 in April. The Weapons of Mass Destruction exercise was one of the last events of Cugno's career. (Photo by OC Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

for the *Connecticut Guardian* (see Up Front with the Adjutant General, page 2).

While Cugno chose to retire early, it did

not put an end to his non-stop energy in fighting for what he believed was best for the Guard.

See CUGNO Pages 14-15

TOPOFF means preparing for the worst through mock disaster drill: hoping it never happens



Members of the 82nd Airborne QRF hit the ground at Camp Rell during TOPOFF. (Photo by OC Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

OC JESSE J. STANLEY
65th PCH

With the changing nature of war and terrorism and the blurring of the lines of conflict it is important for a state and country to always remain ready for the unexpected. Top Officials 3 (TOPOFF 3) is the largest and most complete terrorism response exercise ever performed in the United States. Its goals, according to the Department of Homeland Security, were to strengthen the nation's capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

The culmination of two years of planning was completed during a one-week exercise held April 4-8. More than 10,000 people from more than

See TOPOFF Pages 4-6

Grone: BRAC 2005 important for many reasons

SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Base Realignment and Closure 2005 is in full swing and this round is important for many reasons, said Philip Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment.

To support ongoing force transformation, to improve the joint use of Department of Defense assets and to convert waste to warfighting are important in and of themselves, Grone said April 11.

"But the timing of BRAC for 2005 is also important because it provides a platform, an opportunity, for us to assess the sites and select the sites for forces that will return to the United States as a result of the broader global-force posture realignment that the secretary and the department have undertaken."

DOD uses the process to reorganize its installation infrastructure to most efficiently support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business, according to the BRAC Web site. The first BRAC occurred in 1988, and more followed in 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Congress authorized BRAC 2005 in the fiscal 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. The selection criteria were published in February 2004. In March of this year, President Bush appointed the members of an independent BRAC commission.

The next big BRAC deadline is May 16 when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld must make his recommendations for realignments and closures to Congress and the commission. By Sept. 8, the commission must send its findings to the president, who has until Sept. 23 to approve or disapprove the commission's report.

Grone said that initially all installations are considered for closure or realignment.

"By statute, all military installations are to be treated equally," he said. "Throughout this process, we are assessing all of our installations and functions and missions in an equal way so that we can have a

See BRAC Page 11

Up Front with the Adjutant General

A Final Farewell

Over the past thirty-eight years, especially, the past six years as the adjutant general, I have had the distinct honor of serving with the United States' finest Soldiers and Airmen: members of the Connecticut National Guard.

I thank them for their service and their many sacrifices. Together, as a team, we have had many triumphs and, frankly, some disappointments. Our successes, however, have greatly outweighed any shortcomings. Our sacrifices have also been many.

My decision to retire a year early is based upon the best interests of my family and the Connecticut National Guard. *As you probably know by now*, I was the subject of an investigation which substantiated an allegation of an inappropriate relationship. The crux of the inappropriate relationship was a series of email messages.

Although the Army disposed of the matter with a memorandum of reprimand, after much contemplation, I decided that my early retirement would be the best course of action, rather than subject my family and the Guard to prolonged controversy.

I prefer that the memory of my tour of duty

be positive. We accomplished much. We deployed nearly 3,000 of our members since September 11, 2001, in support of the Global War on Terrorism and numerous state missions. My military construction program is second to none, having realized more than \$150 million dollars in federal funding commitments through fiscal year 2011 and our Guard is flying Black Hawks.

We worked closely with our congressional delegation and General Assembly to pass important legislative initiatives beneficial to our membership, including National Guard Civil Support Teams, the expansion of Tricare and the Operational use of the National Guard for homeland security missions.

This session, the General Assembly should pass legislation that will indemnify our members in a State Active Duty status, cover them under the state's worker's compensation system and recognize their state service as qualifying service for state veteran status. They will also authorize a state mobilization ribbon.

We also focused strongly on our family program, designed to keep our families strong and informed during the mobilization

process and through extended deployments. Our family program has been recognized as one of the best in the nation. To facilitate and promote the activities of our members and their families, we created the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, which serves as a model for other states in their efforts to create similar organizations.

As I transition from military service into our veteran community, I am grateful for the opportunities and challenges presented over the course of my career.

In retirement, I vow to remain an active advocate for issues concerning our service members and veterans

I will ardently support the activities of the Foundation. I will continue to fight for our Guard and their families. Above all, I will never forget their efforts, sacrifices and accomplishments. Continue the battle. Focus on your mission. And always keep your head in the game!

Upon my retirement, I especially owe a special thanks to my wife Carolyn and my two daughters for supporting me over the past four decades, as they have borne the brunt of my military service. They have sacrificed much and withstood many storms for and with me. For them, my gratitude is endless.

I also thank our country, the State of Connecticut and my fellow service members for my success.

I wish you continued success as we continue to defend our country and our way of life in the Global War on Terror.



Maj. Gen.
William A. Cugno
Adjutant General



Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno stands at attention as Congressman Rob Simmons reads a letter thanking the general for his years of service. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State PA NCO)

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Major General William Anthony Cugno
The Adjutant General, Connecticut National Guard
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Dear Major General Cugno: *Bill:*

It has come to my attention that you will be retiring on April 30, 2005.

The purpose of this letter is to thank you for your distinguished service to Connecticut and to America during both your recent assignment as The Adjutant General and throughout your very substantial military career.

You volunteered for service in 1967, graduated from Infantry Officer Candidate School (OCS), served in Vietnam as a Platoon Leader where you were decorated for valor, rose through the ranks with outstanding performances in numerous positions here in Connecticut, graduated from the prestigious Army War College, entered the Retired Reserve for a few months before answering once again the call of duty as Assistant Adjutant General and then as The Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard.

Over the course of this extraordinary public service career you have won numerous awards for service and valor. You have been inducted into the Infantry OCS Hall of Fame. More important than these honors, however, you have shown yourself to be a capable and caring leader of your soldiers, and you have won the affection and respect of those who have worked with you, myself included.

As you conclude these last few days of an extraordinary career of public service, I wish to extend to you my own personal congratulations and thanks, as well as the thanks of a grateful Congress. May God Bless you and your family.

All the best,

[Signature]
Rob Simmons
Member of Congress,
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Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders reunite for a 63rd time

Raiders share their story, spirit with members of the Connecticut National Guard

OC JESSE STANLEY
65th PCH

April 19, 1942 the covers of the newspapers across the United States brought Americans off their knees: Tokyo Bombed they read. In an action that has been described as the turning point of the war in the Pacific, then Lt. Col. James Doolittle led 80 men on a daring mission to strike back at the Japanese. Since their heroic mission that fed the American spirit these brave men have gathered each year to remember and to tell their story to those who would listen. This year, for their 63rd reunion, they came to Groton, Connecticut, to share their story with members of the Connecticut National Guard.

On April 18, 1942, the day before those headlines were read, a secret mission was taking place. The USS Hornet was heading toward Japan with 16 B-25 bombers. Never had a bomber taken off from an aircraft carrier

and since this operation the feat has not been repeated. The planes were stripped down of all unessential equipment including the radio. They had extra fuel tanks installed to make the journey.

They would be flying for more than 14 hours.

The crews were all volunteers who had been training to fly bombers as they had never been flown before. Doolittle brought a lot out of his men.

"General Doolittle was the most inspiring individual in my life," Col. William Bower, Aircraft 12, said. "He was able to generate the most out of anyone he ever worked with."

Each crew went into this mission with the knowledge that their aircraft did not have enough fuel to return. They would have to keep flying into or as close to China as they could before they would either crash land or bail out and hope to find friendly Chinese before they were discovered by the Japanese.

When the ship was more than 200 miles

away from their desired starting point they were spotted by a Japanese vessel that sent word of their location. Doolittle decided to begin the mission at that point rather than abort it.

The first plane, Doolittle's, took off at 8:20 a.m.

Once each aircraft took off from the aircraft carrier each crew was on their own to reach their separate targets while avoiding detection. They had no other aircraft with them, not even each other.

The first bombs were dropped at 12:30 p.m.

Every aircraft was able to reach and destroy their targets except one that experienced mechanical problems that caused it to have to abort early.

Some had an easier time getting to safety than others. Staff Sgt. David Thatcher, Aircraft 7, had what some say is the roughest time. The crew of that plane was badly injured in their landing.

"We were in fifteen feet of water upside down," Thatcher said.

After aiding his crewmates to escape the plane Thatcher went back to the submerged craft and retrieved medical supplies. He also convinced some local fisherman to carry his men toward safety.

Thatcher's actions are credited with saving the lives of his entire crew.

Of the eighty men who took off from the USS Hornet two would die while bailing out of their aircraft, two were executed by the Japanese after they were captured, one died of illness while a prisoner of war, and ten would be killed in action later on during the war. Today only 17 raiders remain.

Their emblem captures the spirit and courage that describes these men, "Toujours Au Danger," Ever into Peril.

"The whole thing was based on typical American confidence," Bower said.



Members of Doolittle's Raiders got together for their 63rd reunion at the AVCRAD in Groton to share their stories of their historic mission with members of the Connecticut Army National Guard. The Raider's were the first, and only, Army pilots to fly B-52 Bombers off the deck of an aircraft carrier. Their historic and heroic mission was in answer to the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. (Photo by OC Jesse J. Stanley, 65th PCH)

TOPOFF brings top officers to Connecticut for world's largest mock terrorist attack

From Page 1

275 government and private organizations, as well as New Jersey, the United Kingdom and Canada, participated in TOPOFF 3. During the exercise simulated attacks occurred in Connecticut and New Jersey. This tested governments and agencies at all levels from the president to the governor and mayors to local police, fire, search-and-rescue personnel and the National Guard.

TOPOFF 3 was also working in conjunction with NORTHCOM's (NC) sponsored Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA) and Homeland Defense exercise, ARDENT SENTRY 05 (AS05). This allowed a unique training opportunity for U.S. Northern Command to practice with federal, state and local agencies as well as the National Guard.

"There are two objectives," said Coast Guard Rear Adm. David Pekoske, representative of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "To test the national response plan and improve readiness."

Normally military are not used for domestic law enforcement. If there is a situation that overwhelms the ability for a state to respond the governor can request assistance from the president who can then authorize military support to a state.

This is exactly what happened in TOPOFF 3.

The simulated attack began at what was supposed to be a summer festival on the water in New London. Authorities received calls about symptoms a large amount of people were beginning to experience. All signs of a possible chemical attack.

Soon after that a car bomb exploded killing people and collapsing a garage. Actors roleplaying the dead and injured lay strewn across the street amid cars and rubble. A number of agencies to include the police, fire and first responders reacted to the incidents.

The Connecticut National Guard was among the agencies responding to the incident. Joint Force Headquarters and 85th Troop Command served as command and control for the Connecticut units deployed in response to the attacks. The initial response was handled by the 14th Civil Support Team, Weapons of Mass Destruction. They specialize in reacting to potential or actual weapons of mass destruction incidents said Maj. Joseph D. Danao, commander of the 14th CST.

Security around the state increased; more Soldiers and Airmen guarded points of interest such as Camp Rell and the Hartford Armory. Security was provided by 134th and 143rd Military Police, 1-102nd Infantry, and the 103rd Security Forces Squadron.

As well, the state's Quick Reaction Force (QRF) mobilized to protect the Millstone Power Plant from potential attack. The state QRF was eventually relieved by 120 members of the federal QRF, 82nd Airborne Division. They were transported by Co. G 104th Aviation.

Decontamination and medical support was provided by 192nd Chemical Battalion, 85th Troop Command and 103rd Medical Squadron.

"I'm going to declare this drill a success," Gov. M. Jodi Rell said. "We learned so much. We did so much, but we have so much more to learn."

She went on to mention that communication between agencies is always something that can be done better.

The entire exercise carried with is a price tag of 16 million dollars. This covered the last two years as well as the week-long simulated attack.

"It was 16 million dollars well spent," Pekoske said. "I could not think of a better way to spend 16 million dollars."

"This drill is over but the learning will go on for months to come," Rell said. "We are going to be able to share this with other states."



Right: Kerry Flaherty, OEM director, discusses events on the phone during TOPOFF. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State PA NCO)



Below: Staff of the Office of Emergency Management had their hands full during the TOPOFF exercise. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton, State PA NCO)



Mock victims of a mock disaster roam around the exercise site in New London looking for assistance from emergency crews. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)



"Victims" of the terrorist attack in New London are carried away by firefighters. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)

TOPOFF: CST takes training to next level

Spc. JORDAN E. WERME
65TH PRESS CAMP

The 14th Civil Support Team, Weapons of Mass Destruction, participated in Top Officers 3 (TOPOFF), a training exercise that brought military and civilian personnel together to combat simulated attacks. It was the first such training event for the CST, and the unit did not disappoint.

"The team performed in a superior fashion," said Maj. Joseph D. Danao, commander of the 14th CST. "We've trained really hard. They came into an incident site that was growing in maturity at a rapid rate and fit themselves right in."

The exercise, which began for the CST late in the afternoon, came right on the heels of an extensive training program at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and allowed very little time for recovery.

"We just got back three days ago," said Danao, "so on [no] rest we've worked about three weeks straight. The exercise out at Fort Leonard Wood was great, but very taxing. [So coming] into TOPOFF under the pressure of that level of exercise with many first responders was a challenge for the team, and they met that challenge."

The CST arrived at Fort Trumbull in response to a simulated chemical agent attack. Once the team was on the ground they went to work assisting the Department of Environmental Protection, FBI and other agencies in identifying the chemical agent present.

"We assisted the incident commander and the FBI with the sampling of a casualty that was suspected to have some exposure," said Danao.

"We made a joint entry with members from the DEP and FBI to take a sample from a casualty's clothing so we could verify the presence of the blister agent down range," said Cpl. Evan R. Lock, a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical survey team member with the 14th CST.

The sample collection and analysis process took less than one hour, a turn-around time that would be impossible without the CST's mobile laboratory. Traditionally, the sample would be sent to a lab for analysis, causing a delay of several hours in the containment and treatment process.

"It was a great resource for the incident commander to be able to do that in 45 minutes," said Danao.

"We had everything we needed for equipment," said Spc. Alan Diamond, also an NBC survey team member. "It was really good getting to work with the FBI and they got to see a little bit of what we can do. I'm sure we can build from there."

"It was the first time we'd worked with all the different agencies," said Lock, "so it was a learning experience, a positive experience for all of us."

The TOPOFF exercise provided not only the CST, but numerous other military and civilian units, the opportunity to learn from



Equipment of the 14th CST/WMD is unloaded for use. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)

each other in an environment similar to that which would be present in an actual emergency situation.

"Our mission, by order of the governor and the adjutant general, is to support an incident commander at a potential, or actual, weapons of mass destruction incident," said Danao. "The TOPOFF exercise was a great training tool for us to

get exposure to how first responders run a scene where an actual WMD event occurred."

The 22-member team consists of 17 National Guard Soldiers and five Airmen, all serving as active duty servicemembers. Each member undergoes extensive training to become involved with the elite unit. More than 2,000 hours of training are required for each member to become qualified on the equipment used to accomplish the mission. Those hours, which normally fall within an 18-month training schedule, have been accomplished by the CST in just about seven months, said Danao.

"I'm very proud of the members of the 14th Civil Support Team," said Danao. "It's a great unit and I hope it will be a great asset to incident commanders in Connecticut as well as the nation. Our capability that we have with these vehicles and personnel is we can deploy by air to any state, to any territory and to the territorial waters. There is an expectation at some point, when we're certified, that we'll be launching from Bradley International Airport to support another state or another governor at an incident."

The unit is not yet certified for domestic deployment, but that certification process is expected to be complete this summer, said Danao.



Members of the 14th Civil Support Team/Weapons of Mass Destruction begin to unload their equipment in New London during the mass disaster training exercise, TOPOFF. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)



TOPOFF: Battlefield handoff of Millstone a success

PFC. JOSEPH BROOKS
65TH PCH

A Vehicle Borne Intermittent Explosive Device (VBIED) more commonly known as a car bomb is detonated in New London. The FBI determines that Connecticut has just been the subject of a terrorist attack. By order of the Governor the critical infrastructure of Connecticut needs to be safeguarded immediately. This includes Millstone Nuclear Power Plant.

This is the situation that Connecticut's Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was presented with during the Top Officials 3 (TOPOFF 3) exercise which took place from April 4 through April 8. With just this information the QRF was required to do a rapid deployment to Millstone Nuclear Power Plant and safeguard it against further terrorist threats.

Connecticut's QRF is a specialized unit of the Connecticut Army National Guard (CTARNG) which is made up of members from several different units from across the state. They volunteer their time to do additional drilling and training and are always available to respond to any type of emergency.

Members from 7 different units of the CTARNG converged on Camp Rell on April 4th to begin preparations for the exercise. They were lead by Capt. David Pickel, the commander of the QRF.

"This is an awesome representation of the soldiering and training capabilities of the CTNG," said Pickel. "All these Soldiers have come from different units and are consolidated to perform a very important duty".

The QRF pulled multiple guard shifts at 6 different control points to augment the security personnel that were already employed by Millstone. They made their presence know as a protecting force for three day of the operation.

On the third day of the operation the protection of Millstone was turned to federal control in an exercise to test the capabilities of a battlefield handoff.

On April 6 the federal QRF comprised of 120 Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division. The federal QRF arrived by CH-47 "Chinook" helicopters flown by members of the CTNG 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD).

Col. David J. Bongi, Defense Coordination Officer for the TOPOFF exercise was in charge of seeing that the handover of Millstone to the federal QRF went smoothly.

"So far it has been excellent. They have shown good command and excellent planning throughout the exercise," commented Bongi.

When asked how he felt the CTNG and the federal units benefited from the exercise, Bongi responded, "It has raised everyone's awareness and confidence level in the ability to respond to a terrorist threat. To see this level of professionalism is amazing."



A Soldier of the the Connecticut Army National Guard's QRF stands guard duty at the gate of Millstone. (Photo by OC Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)



Soldiers guard the entrance gate of Millstone Nuclear Power Plant during TOPOFF. The Soldiers were part of the state QRF participating in the mock disaster exercise. (Photo by OC Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)

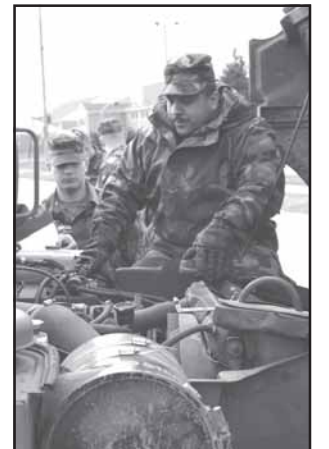


Photo at right: Soldiers of the Quick Reaction Force take the time to perform PMCS on one of their vehicles before heading out on the road. (Photo by OC Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)



Members of the 82nd Airborne QRF hit the ground as they come off the helicopters that brought them to Camp Rell during TOPOFF. The Soldiers were part of the federal QRF that was brought into the exercise to relieve the state QRF at Millstone Nuclear Power Plant. (Photo by Maj. Lou Martinez, 65th PCH)

ORI - Mission Accomplished

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

BRADLEY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, East Granby, Conn. – The 103rd Fighter Wing conducted the combat operations phase of an Operational Readiness Inspection here March 31 to April 3 to validate the unit can perform its wartime mission.

In May 2004, the wing simulated deployment to a combat location for the first phase of the inspection.

The overall inspection evaluated the wing's performance in initial response, employment, mission support, and ability to survive and operate or ATSO.

During that May 2004 inspection some areas for improvement were noted so a re-inspection of the second phase was planned.

To prepare, the wing took steps that included reassigning key personnel, requesting staff assistance visits, conducting two intense exercises, focusing on the weak area get well plans and developing a detailed training plan.

In addition, a contractor and the wing Inspector General validated corrections were complete. Nearly a year later, the inspection came to satisfactory completion.

"Coming out of the May '04 inspection we had to restore the pride we took to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003," said Col.

Daniel L. Peabody, commander, 103rd Fighter Wing. "It took a whole wing effort but you demonstrated to the ACC IG team that the Flying Yankees are second to none. Despite the rains and driving winds, working over twelve-hour shifts, and more than half-a-dozen airfield attacks you continued to recover and meet our mission tasking...all without a single injury. This was truly an entire team effort and I am extremely proud of your performance."

The maintenance group carries the brunt of preparing the aircraft for battle or inspection.

"We did well because of the details," said Col. John P. Swift, commander 103rd Maintenance Group. "The extra emphasis on working and tracking details clearly paid-off. I had an awful lot of pride in how hard everyone worked."

Civil engineers simulate in the inspection they are setting up a bare base without support, while the reality for this inspection was the opposite.

"The success of team CE [civil engineering] this time came from the help of security forces, communications flight, and military personnel flight augmentees," said Lt.Col. James Works, commander, 103rd Civil Engineering Squadron. "It [the support] gave us the ability to execute our CE required tasks with the few technical folks we have. Everybody focused on winning the war and

did extremely well."

During the inspection augmentees from across all base organizations pitched in to support the warfighters. The Mission Support Group Commander would not want it any other way.

"Being on the other side of the street in

maintenance for so long I know how important it is to get the support you need," said Col. Frederick R. Miclon, commander, 103rd Mission Support Group. "'Our number one priority is supporting the wing and it [ORI] was a team fighter wing effort.'"



Lt.Col. Joseph E. Prokop, commander, 103rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, reviews a mask fit test report as part of a final check of members individual field gear and protective equipment March 31 before the Operational Readiness Inspection at Bradley Air National Guard Base. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Linas K. Venclauskas, 103rd Communications Flight)



103rd Fighter Wing members in their chemical protective suits and field gear hold up their dog tags as part of a last minute review March 31 before the Operational Readiness Inspection at Bradley Air National Guard Base. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Linas K. Venclauskas, 103rd Communications Flight)

143d ASG Soldiers ensure travel of U.S. Embassy personnel in, out of Iraq

MAJ. EDWARD BARRY
ROTARY WING OIC
US EMBASSY, BAGHDAD

The white Opel sedan pulled into the convoy at a high rate of speed. Before the military escorts could react, the Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) detonated. The suicide driver of the car, that was the VBIED, was vaporized instantly.

The armored bus with its load of passengers was rocked by the blast. The armored bus is known by its manufacturer's trade name, the "Rhino." Though the Rhino sustained significant damage, it performed its function as all of its occupants, while visibly shaken, survived.

This event was not an isolated incident. There were previous ambush attempts on coalition convoys on the route to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). The Regional Security Officer, responsible for U.S. Embassy security, recommended prohibiting ground travel on this route to U.S. Embassy personnel until the security issues could be addressed. Ambassador Negroponte agreed and the following day U.S. Embassy personnel were prohibited from the use of the airport road.

The only way for U.S. Embassy personnel to get from the International Zone (IZ) to the airport was by air. The IZ is also known as the Green Zone where the U.S. Embassy and the fledgling Iraqi government offices are located. The flight mission was performed by UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters flown by the men and women of the 244th Aviation Regiment, Florida Army National Guard.

This was not the first time an "Air Bridge" was utilized. During a particularly dangerous period in the summer of 2004, an Air Bridge was attempted. That Air Bridge was not successful due to disorganization, a lack of coordination, and inadequate passenger briefs and controls.

For this Air Bridge, the Joint Area Support Group-Central (JASG-C) Transportation Branch took control. The JASG-C manning levels were increased at this point with Soldiers from the 143^d Area Support Group. So with the combination of Army aviation and ground transportation personnel added to the officers and Airmen already in the Transportation Branch, the JASG-C was ready for the challenge.

Prior to each day's Air Bridge, Maj. Edward Barry of the Rotary Wing Section staffed the requirements for the following day and created a plan to support those requirements. The Transportation Branch has a mandate to move all personnel requesting ground transportation to the Baghdad Airport. The existing system in place to coordinate and manifest personnel on Rhino Buses was updated to facilitate movement on Black Hawk Helicopters.

At the vehicle staging area, JASG ground transportation personnel Sgt. 1st Class Brent Heidenis and Spc. Michelle Dewey would manifest the personnel into air mission chocks. A chock is defined as the personnel that will fit on one aircraft. These personnel chocks were then transported on buses to landing zone (LZ) to board their aircraft.

Once at the LZ, JASG Aviation Liaison Officers (LNO) Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Ritchie and Sgt. Steven Leach would organize, brief and line up the personnel to fly. The LNO coordinated with the Air Traffic Control personnel of Company E, 126th Aviation Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, who controlled operations on LZ Washington.

Through radio communications with the control tower, the LNO would know where and when the Black Hawks would land. With the assistance of additional soldiers from other directorates of the JASG, passengers were directed to get their

baggage loaded on to the trail aircraft and to safely move to the lead aircraft. Once on board the helicopters, the crew chiefs assumed control and ensured that the baggage and passengers were secured properly.

It's a short helicopter ride to BIAP. This is a combat zone and precautions are enforced. M-60D door guns are mounted and armed by the crew chiefs, the aircraft always move in pairs, and the routes are varied to avoid predictability. The aircraft are flown tactically, 120 knots or greater at a height immediately above any obstacles en-route.

One way to describe the flight is "barnstorming" and the ride is quite exhilarating. Three JASG transportation personnel went to BIAP daily to assist inbound personnel coming to the IZ and perform functions similar to the LNOs at LZ Washington. Once at BIAP, JASG personnel met the outgoing personnel, assisted with off load of baggage and coordinated follow on travel. There was a JASG BIAP LNO

detailed to assist passengers in making their connecting flights or for making accommodations if their flight departed the following day. The BIAP LNO also assisted incoming personnel that were traveling to the IZ.

With the organization, dedication and professionalism of all involved, the "Holiday Air Bridge" was a resounding success. Some milestones achieved during this mission; 5,683 passengers safely transported on 449 sorties, over 750,000 lbs of baggage, during 38 days of operations. Ambassador Jeffrey personally thanked the JASG Transportation Branch for their hard work and dedication. With the knowledge gained from this operation the personnel assigned to the IZ can rest assured of a safe and efficient way to and from BIAP. In the words of AMB Browning "This operation will go down in the history books as a model of efficiency and responsiveness."

The JASG has now conducted three successful Air Bridge operations.



JASG Transportation Branch personnel at the conclusion of a successful day of Air Bridge operations. Standing: Tech. Sgt. Roy Walker, Master Sgt. Steve Quintana, Tech. Sgt. Frederick Earle, Maj. Ed Barry, and Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Ritchie. Kneeling: Sgt. Steve Leach (Photo courtesy of Maj. Edward Barry)

Medal of Honor recipient offers lessons in leadership to officer candidates, guests

OC CLAUDE HIBBERT
65th PCH

Medal of Honor recipient, retired U.S. Army Captain Paul W. Bucha delivered a moving speech to the invited guests at Officer Candidate School Class 50's Dining Out on April 16. Bucha offered an important lesson on leadership which was based on his experiences in Vietnam.

The Dining Out was a break in tradition for Officer Candidate School (OCS), which opened the event to attendance by civilian guests. Seventy officers, noncommissioned officers, and their guests filed into the Officer's Club at the Hartford Armory by 6:30 Saturday night.

Bucha arrived unceremoniously and mingled with the guests before the formation of the receiving line. His modest appearance belied the heroic acts recounted in the Medal of Honor citation that was included in the Dining-Out program.

Bucha graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West point and from Stanford Business School. He served as Commander of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 101st Air Borne Division. He currently sits on the board of a number of directorships including the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation and the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund. He is presently the CEO of a specialized real estate development corporation called Terra Mark LLC based out of New York, NY.

Despite this impressive citation and the Medal of Honor he wore around his neck, Bucha talked about his respect for the men and women in the National Guard. He said that guardsmen and reservists like those present had the difficult task of balancing both a civilian and a military occupation.

He noted the financial sacrifices families, employers, and communities faced as the total army deployed guard units in record numbers. He knew that guardsmen and reservists had served honorably in their deployments despite their hardships.

Bucha spoke about the responsibility that the nation had to families of service-members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. In one case, base housing regulations forced widowed spouses to move off base within thirty days after the death of the service member.

Seeing the need to break regulation a base commander allowed spouses to stay longer and was instrumental in eventually changing that regulation. Another example of antiquated policies was the \$12,000 death benefit provided to widowed spouses. In 1968, this amount would have provided substantial financial support however, thirty-six years later it would barely pay for transition expenses.

Veterans, including Bucha's foundation, the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, led the way by financial aid to those families through gifts of \$11,000 to the surviving spouse and an additional \$5,000 for each dependent child. These veterans then lobbied governments to pay for and increase that death benefit. The responsibility for leading that level of activism was on the shoulders of everyone. This point touched many who already work with the National Guard Foundation and Family Program initiatives to help support military families in need.

Bucha said it was his honor to address the Officer Candidates in Class 50. He commended the candidates for their decision to enter officer candidate school at a time of war. This was in itself a courageous act. He cautioned them that the duty of command should never be taken for granted. Despite being retired for more than thirty years, Bucha still maintains the honor and responsibility of serving the men formerly under his command. Based on his own experience in Vietnam he wanted to impart a few basic principles for leadership.

He first asked the candidates to establish clear and finite objectives and then develop battle plans to accomplish them.

"Define the exit strategy by successfully accomplishing the objective. Assemble an overwhelming military force structure. Ensure that your troops are properly trained, equipped, and staffed. Develop overwhelming political force to insure the

military force can succeed." This was a philosophy developed by his friend Colin Powell and was supported by many Vietnam veterans

including his classmate at West Point, former Army Chief of Staff Eric K. Shinseki.

In order to implement those plans he cautioned Candidates to trust in their NCO leadership. The NCO core was the backbone of military and responsible for getting troops ready to fight. Bucha illustrated this point with the story about his first sergeant in Vietnam.

One night the large Native American first sergeant of Delta Company tearfully admitted to Bucha how much he loved training troops. That night he determined that he had succeeded in his mission to train Delta Company to follow Bucha's orders. However, the first sergeant remarked that command was not a responsibility that he relished. This was because it was now the responsibility of Bucha as the commanding officer to decide who lived and who died.

As Bucha addressed the guests at the Dining-Out, the strain of command was visible on his face. The decisions he made in March of 1968 still haunt him.

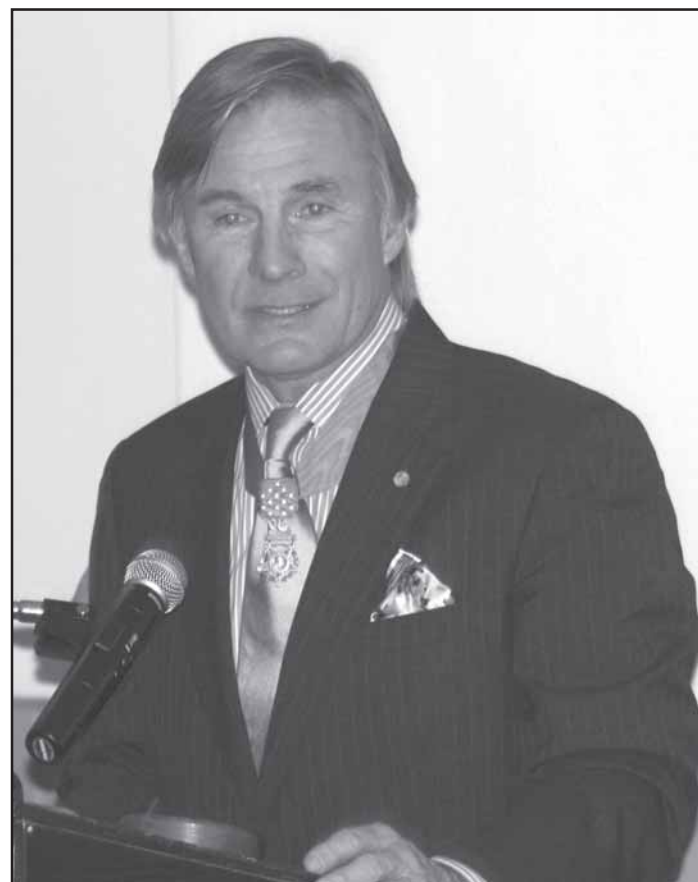
An excerpt of the citation reads, "The Company was inserted by helicopter into the suspected enemy stronghold to locate and destroy the enemy. During this period Capt. Bucha aggressively and courageously led his men in the destruction of enemy fortifications and base areas and eliminated scattered resistance impeding the advance of the company.

"On 18 March while advancing to contact, the lead elements of the company became engaged by the heavy automatic weapon, heavy machinegun, rocket propelled grenade, Claymore mine and

small-arms fire of an estimated battalion-size force. Capt. Bucha, with complete disregard for his safety, moved to the threatened area to direct the defense and ordered reinforcements to the aid of the lead element. Seeing that his men were pinned down by heavy machinegun fire from a concealed bunker located some 40 meters to the front of the positions, Capt. Bucha crawled through the hail of fire to single-handedly destroy the bunker with grenades.

"During this heroic action Capt. Bucha received a painful shrapnel wound. Returning to the perimeter, he observed that his unit could not hold its positions and repel the human wave assaults launched by the determined enemy. Capt. Bucha ordered the withdrawal of the unit elements and covered the withdrawal to positions of a company perimeter from which he could direct fire upon the charging enemy. When one friendly element retrieving casualties was ambushed and cut off from the perimeter, Capt. Bucha ordered them to feign death and he directed artillery fire around them.

"During the night Capt. Bucha moved throughout the position, distributing ammunition, providing encouragement and insuring the integrity of the defense. He directed artillery, helicopter gunship and Air Force gunship fire on the enemy strong points and attacking forces, marking the positions with smoke grenades. Using



Medal of Honor recipient, retired U.S. Army Captain Paul W. Bucha addresses guests at the Officer Candidate Class 50 Dining Out. (Photo by OC Claude Hibbert, 65th PCH)

flashlights in complete view of enemy snipers, he directed the medical evacuation of 3 air-ambulance loads of seriously wounded personnel and the helicopter supply of his company. At daybreak Capt. Bucha led a rescue party to recover the dead and wounded members of the ambushed element."

He reminded the candidates to have compassion for their troops.

"Look after their welfare and understand that crying is not a sign of weakness. It is actually a sign of humanity and normalcy. Look at your Soldiers with a sense of respect and awe for the sacrifice that they and their families are making. The fact that young Soldiers willingly entrust their lives to you and follow your orders is awesome. Understand that they are trusting in you get them home. The role of the NCO corps is to prepare troops to follow and execute orders and it was the responsibility of commanding officers to be worthy of that command."

Despite the lessons in leadership taught by cadre of Connecticut's OCS program during the last year, Paul Bucha's example would leave a searing imprint in the OC's minds. Personally, Bucha's speech helped to re-inspire one OC's personal mission: to improve the lot of service-members and their families by mobilizing the resources from the public and private sector. It also helped that OC to understand the continuing responsibility and honor of leadership.

One Soldier's thoughts on his daughter, children

FIRST SGT. JOSEPH ALLSOP
143RD ASG, BAGHDAD

When the 143d Area Support Group deployed, it was an eye opener as to how Operation Iraqi Freedom has reached out and touched the majority of Connecticut National Guard units and their families. In the mix of requests for information and preparing to come over based on that information, overall I still did not know what to expect. On a personal note, my deploying was another parent for my daughter to say good bye to for at least a year. Yes, since February 2003, my daughter has had a parent deployed to support OIF2 and OIF 3.

Prior to leaving, I stopped at her school and sat down with her third grade classmates. We talked, and I was inundated with many questions about "The War." My answer was that we planned to do a great job as a unit, like all the units from Connecticut before us. As the Group Commander quoted, "we would be making history;" helping in the rebuilding of a country as part of a Multi-National Coalition.

It seems our stay here has brought together more than just our armed forces and

dignitaries; it has also united the children of our countries. Several soldiers have been in constant contact with classrooms across Connecticut bringing new and exciting knowledge to our children about Iraq, it's culture and of course, Iraq's children. We can say it is more than amazing to hear about the children's response as they receive our letters about our adventures in this foreign land.

How enlightening to hear about the third grade class at a local elementary school in Enfield that is doing a report for the rest of the school on the country of Iraq. While one student holds up the Iraqi flag, another will say "hello" (Mar-haba) in Arabic as another will explain the flag, what the colors represent or what the quote says, than in closing with an Arabic goodbye (maa el-sa-la-ma). On the other side of the state we have students bringing in school supplies to donate to the Iraqi kids in spite of their own budget cuts for supplies. For a student to donate a pencil or an eraser with such enthusiasm represents the true spirit of reaching out and helping others in times of need.

Sgt. 1st Class Brent Heidenis is a teacher

back home at North Haven Middle School. He has definite thoughts on how to explain his need to be here.

"I want to emphasize that we are not here to glorify killing or war. This is what my students asked me a lot at the middle school level when I was about to leave. They would get all excited and ask if I was going to get to shoot somebody. Of course the students who asked me these types of questions do not know any better and all their violent video games and movies only reinforce their ideas on how great war is. So my challenge had been to show the REAL positives of this conflict like reintroducing democracy to the land where it originated during the times of Mesopotamia. Or to break down social barriers like the perception that all Iraqis are bad and want to kill us. The fact is that most of them welcome us and are happy that we are here to help them forge ahead under a new Government that will become legendary in their rich and diverse history."

The Joint Area Support Group has adopted two Iraqi schools. We receive donations from families of deployed

Soldiers, Connecticut residents and organizations. They send school supplies and sports equipment. Our volunteers go out on visits to give the Iraqi school students their supplies and to see their eyes light up!

Of course, the previous regime had propaganda that "America is the Infidel" and is evil. Our kids all over the world will live what they learn. Seeing the many friendly faces, the gifts and school supplies flowing in has also brought a new attitude for them.

We as Soldiers, parents and adults must educate our children to seek out opportunities to reach out and to help others in their time of need. For Iraq, this is that time.

To share our experiences with our children, bringing them the true meaning of what we are doing here and why, has opened their minds to new levels. The possibilities of educating our children, in both the United States and Iraq, has limitless potential for peace now and in the years to come.



Mrs. Ceratto's third grade class from Alcorn Elementary School in Enfield, Conn. The Iraqi flag is being held by 1st Sgt. Joseph Allsop's daughter, Marissa. Allsop is deployed to Iraq. (Photo courtesy 143rd ASG)

BRAC timeline explained

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defensible package of recommendations to provide to the independent commission."

There are several criteria for selecting a base, but one top consideration is the installation's current and future mission capabilities and the effect on operational readiness of the total force, including the impact on joint warfighting, training and readiness.

"In this round of BRAC, the joint cross-service groups that we have established have greater breadth (than BRAC 1995)," Grone said. "So rather than looking at, as we did in 1995, depot maintenance in this round of BRAC, we're looking at all of the industrial activities of the department on a joint basis."

Medical functions, headquarters and support, education and training, intelligence, supply and storage are all being assessed from a joint perspective, he said. This will help provide the most efficient military structure.

Grone said that jointness is a "key aspect" of this BRAC. "The decision process in this BRAC is joint from top to bottom in this round of BRAC," he said.

Another important criterion is the availability and condition of lands, facilities and associated airspace at existing and potential receiving locations. That availability

also extends to homeland-defense training missions.

Officials at bases chosen for closure or major realignment can expect the process to be completed within six years from the approval of recommendations. They can also expect some assistance and guidance from the DOD and interagency partners, Grone said.

Officials at DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment make planning grants and assistance available. Also, Grone said, a series of policy reforms will enhance the DOD's ability to move forward to close or realign a base as expeditiously as possible to allow the economic redevelopment of the areas affected.

"All the communities that support our military installations do so very solidly with a great deal of cooperation and partnership," he said. "But as a result of what we must do to enhance the military mission, it's inevitable that there will be some bases, as excess capacity, that no longer will be required.

"In those circumstances, we're going to work in a very productive way, we trust, with those local communities ... working in partnership with them to provide a foundation for solid economic redevelopment," Grone said.

Forging new friendships in Iraq



A teacher at an Iraqi school gives the "thumbs up" to show her appreciation for the donated school supplies dropped off by Sgt. Karen Reilly and other members of the 143rd. The 143rd ASG has adopted two schools in Baghdad. The unit delivers clothing and supplies donated by supporters in the U.S. (Photo courtesy of 143rd ASG)

Wing honor guard invited to Fenway

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103rd FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

The wing honor guard of the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Fighter Wing, based in East Granby, presented the colors at Fenway Park in Boston April 14.

As the National Anthem played, Staff Sgt. Meisha Nieves, Master Sgt. Scott McIntosh, Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Pilletere, Staff Sgt. Carey Gaul, Staff Sgt. Sabrina Wiggett and 1st Lt. Martin Kelly, presented the colors before a Boston Red Sox versus New York Yankees game.

"It as an awesome experience standing out there in front of 35,000 people," said Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Pilletere, honor guard member and services specialist, 103rd Services Flight. "I did not think too much about it while we were standing there [on the field]. While you are there, you just think about what you are doing, but after I saw it on the monitor - wow."

So how did the fighter wing honor guard end up at the game?

"Master Sgt. Weeks [103rd Air Control Squadron] and I were at the November officer's dining-in talking about ways to give the honor guard more exposure and she suggested Fenway Park," said 1st Lt. Martin Kelly, physicians assistant and wing honor guard OIC, 103rd Medical Group. "So I got in touch with a gentlemen there, he said, 'give me a call in February or March.' When I did he said 'how about April 14?' and I said, 'Is that a Yankee Red Sox game, he said 'it was,'

so I said, 'We will be there.'"

The Red Sox organization has invited the fighter wing honor guard back for a future date.

"One of our members, Tech. Sgt. Dow [103rd Medical Group] is deployed to Qatar," said Kelly. "He is due back in May so I will have to get him on that one[detail]."

The detail also gave the honor guard a chance to show their skill to a larger crowd.

"It really got us a lot more exposure," said Staff Sgt. Carey Gaul, avionics communication/navigation craftsman and honor guard NCOIC, 103rd Maintenance Squadron. "It was a huge rush, but at the same time, I was thinking Bradley has a pretty darn fine honor guard."

Red Sox and Yankee match-ups are special for Connecticut as the state has large numbers of fans for both teams.

"Just to be a Fenway made it that much better for me," said Gaul. "I love the [Red] Sox."

The game fans gave the honor guard some immediate feedback as they left the field.

"People in the stands were just hooting and hollering saying thanks for your service and some older men were actually saluting," said Pilletere. "We felt really welcome."

The honor guard renders honors at memorial services and special military and civilian events. Joining the honor guard requires a three-year commitment as additional duty while members continue to

work in current Air Force specialty.

Honor guard members receive special uniforms and must attend training at least once at an active duty base.

"I am very fortunate to have this great group of highly motivated individuals, they were trained well," said Kelly.

The Air Force honor guard conducts training at active duty bases on rotating schedule. Interested Airmen should contact the honor guard NCOIC Staff Sgt. Carey Gaul or OIC 1st Lt. Martin Kelly for more information.



The wing honor guard of the Connecticut Air National Guard's 103rd Fighter Wing based in East Granby, Conn., present the colors at Fenway Park in Boston April 14. As the National Anthem is sung, Staff Sgt. Meisha Nieves, Master Sgt. Scott McIntosh, Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Pilletere, Staff Sgt. Carey Gaul, Staff Sgt. Sabrina Wiggett and 1st Lt. Martin Kelly, behind with sword, present the colors before the Boston Red Sox versus New York Yankees game begins. (Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Linas K. Venclauskas, 103rd Communications Flight)

2004 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year – Staff Sgt. Meisha A. Nieves

STAFF SGT. CAROLYN A. ASELTON
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCOIC

Staff Sgt. Meisha A. Nieves, personnel journeyman, 103rd Military Personnel Flight, has been selected as the Connecticut Air National Guard's 2004 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

"I'm humbled," Nieves said. "When I perform my job everyday, it's not something that when I do it I'm thinking about getting an award...I do it because I have integrity."

She is a "tireless Airman who tackles daily tasks with the same dedication to excellence," said Capt. Ann C. Ware, commander, 103rd Military Personnel Flight. She said Nieves' leadership and job performance was unparalleled and that she is an "extraordinary dedicated professional" who "shines in all she does."

In her work, Nieves completed nearly 350 DD Form 214s to help ensure veterans receive credit due for service and implemented a tracking program for the form. She also redesigned and implemented a training program for unit members to complete vital personnel documents.

"I treat every customer as I would like to be treated as a customer," she said. She works as a temporary technician for the flight during the week.

Nieves can be found a lot of places besides the customer service

counter. Last year she supported Task Force Husky at Camp Rell where she performed construction and masonry work. She also is a member of the base honor guard, is a board member for the National Guard Association of Connecticut and is a Family Support Program volunteer.

The future sixth-grade English teacher, who is studying at Manchester Community College, said she enlisted in the Guard "to serve and honor my country and to take advantage of the benefits. It was a way for me to go to college."

In the future, Nieves said she would like to become a first sergeant or command chief because she "loves dealing with people" and that position would allow her to take care of members.

The base honor guard member is not new to awards. She has received the 103rd Fighter Wing's 2004 Diamond Award from the first sergeants and was also the wings's NCO of the Month for October 2004 and NCO of the Year for 2004, as well as 2003 Honor Guardsman of the Year.

On the outside, Nieves is involved with her daughter, Aneyah's, daycare, where she is treasurer of its parent committee. In addition, she is president of her condominium association.

Nieves lives in Hartford with her husband Edwin and daughter and likes to spend her free time with her family, reading and singing.



Staff Sgt. Meisha A. Nieves
Portrait by 103rd Communications Flight

2004 Outstanding Airman of the Year – Senior Airman Erin E. McNamara

STAFF SGT. CAROLYN A. ASELTON
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCOIC

Senior Airman Erin E. McNamara, still photographer, 103rd Communications Flight, has been selected as the Connecticut Air National Guard's 2004 Airman of the Year.

"I'm flattered that I work with people who support their Airmen so well to acknowledge the efforts that they have been putting in," she said. "This isn't all my work (alone.)"

The award comes early in McNamara's career. She has been a member of the wing for two years. Throughout her short career, the Bristol resident has exemplified "the Air Force core values through service before self, unquestionable integrity and an unmatched commitment to excellence," according to her commander, Maj. John M. Warren, 103rd Communications Flight.

Recent wing exercises and inspections have allowed McNamara to showcase her skills. She distinguished herself as a Superior Performer during the 2004 Operational Readiness Inspection. As an emergency medical technician, she utilized her talents not only in responding to

simulated injuries during the wargames, but also to train unit members in Self Aid and Buddy Care across the wing.

McNamara said the Air Guard allows her "the opportunity to practice a skill outside my day-to-day (job)," and that she feels "privileged to be able to work with the Airmen of the 103rd. It's been a great pleasure."

While in tech school at her photography course at Fort Meade, Md., McNamara was an Honor Graduate, served as a Squadron Leader, and earned the Outstanding Fitness Award as well as the Sharp Troop Award.

The photographer said she plans to retire from the Guard and, depending on the degree she is able to attain on the outside, is contemplating a commission.

In her spare time, of which she said she has very little, McNamara said she enjoys canoeing and hiking. She is involved with many community activities, to include volunteering for the Cromwell Fire Department and participates in the Moodus Drum and Fife Core as a Snare/Base Drummer and Fifer.



Senior Airman Erin E. McNamara
Portrait by 103rd Communications Flight

2005 Outstanding Sr. NCO of the Year - Master Sgt. Kevin N. Cyr

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103RD FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Master Sgt. Kevin N. Cyr, NCOIC of Cargo Movement, 103rd Logistics Readiness Squadron is the Connecticut Air National Guard Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.

"I was surprised and excited of course," said Cyr about learning of the recognition. "It is a challenge [to live up to] but one that I accept."

The thirteen-year veteran earned the honor through his efforts in the Cargo Deployment Function during the Operational Readiness Inspection and support to actual contingency tasking.

His efforts directing the team that corrected cargo discrepancies in the inspection resulted in two error free aircraft loads, something the Inspector General team had not witnessed in 3 years.

"Through Master Sgt. Cyr's leadership the 103d Fighter Wing successfully simulated deployment of 338 personnel and 200.6 short

tons of cargo on 8 simulated charter and military aircraft during Phase I ORI," according to the nomination for the award.

His team-building efforts as NCOIC led to the cargo deployment function earning three superior performance team awards from the Inspector General team.

Beyond Cyr's efforts for the ORI, his skill performing the critical mission was tested supporting a contingency deployment for the 103rd Air Control Squadron just two-weeks before the ORI.

"Cyr's patience and ability to juggle multiple priorities were key to successfully deploying and redeploying the GSU with 5 truckloads and 69.5 short tons of cargo with little impact to ORI preparation activities," according to the nomination for the award.

"His aggressiveness in ensuring customer service went above and beyond what is expected; while only required to ship the cargo to destination, he coordinated return of the cargo to ensure successful redeployment."



Master Sgt. Kevin N. Cyr
Portrait by 103rd Communications Flight

Connecticut Military Department News



Maj. Commandant Dennis Conroy leads members of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard in the Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade held on March 19.

Thanks for all of our submissions that you have included over the last couple of months. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Mark Boudreau, 1st Company Governor's Foot Guard)



BIG BAND DANCE TO BENEFIT SECOND COMPANY GOVERNOR'S FOOT GUARD BAND

FRIDAY ...MAY 6, 2005
7:00 TO 11:00 PM

\$ 20 Admission



\$20 Admission

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Tickets remaining available at the door or call now to reserve yours; 203-269-6695

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CW4 John J De Pastino
(203) 757-4113 jjdep@hotmail.com

or

SFC Joseph Nuzzo
(203) 469-6986 jnuzzo@snet.net

Sponsored by The Second Company, Governor's FootguardBandof
New Haven, CT

Please help us support them!

Connecticut National Guard Foundation Inc

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation Inc announces its 2005 scholarship program. This year the foundation will award a total of **four** scholarships.

1. A single \$2500.00 scholarship honoring SGT Felix Delgreco Jr. will be awarded to a son or daughter of a member of the Connecticut ARMY National Guard.
2. Three \$1500.00 scholarships will be awarded to Connecticut National Guard and Organized Militia members or their sons, daughters, or spouses.

Application forms may be found on the Foundations web site at: www.ctngfoundation.org

Additional Information: **APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED TO: 27 MAY 2005**

1. Complete application packets must be postmarked no later than May 27, 2005
2. The selection committee will choose students based on achievement and citizenship
3. You must be enrolled in, or planning to attend a regionally or nationally accredited degree or technical program
4. Mail application form and completed package to:

CTNG Foundation Inc.
Attn: Scholarship Committee
360 Broad Street, Hartford Armory
Hartford, CT 06015

5. Please contact the foundation at (860) 241 1550 or e-mail ctngfi@sbcglobal.net for further details.

Cugno retires ending 3

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Cugno enlisted in the Army in 1967 as an infantryman, completed basic training, attended OCS and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He went to Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader

and got out of the Army upon his return to the United States in 1969. In 1970 he applied to become a member of the Connecticut Army National Guard and upon acceptance as a first lieutenant, became the last battery commander of the Nike Missile Site in Windsor Locks.

"Most of my time in the Guard has been spent in

command positions," said Cugno.

In fact, Cugno's command positions include the 1st Battalion, 192nd (Coastal) Artillery; Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 242nd Engineer Battalion; 130th Public Affairs Detachment; Recruiting and Retention; 242nd Engineer Battalion and the 85th Troop Command. He also served as the Director of Plans, Operations and Military Support until he retired in 1996.

He was recalled to active duty in 1997 as Assistant Adjutant General, and finally was appointed Adjutant General on June 1, 1999. He received his federal recognition as a major general in April 2000.

Cugno said he came back in 1997 because he had "always had the goal of becoming adjutant general."

In the 38 years Cugno spent in the military, he has seen many changes.

"Early in my career people were coming into the Guard seeking an alternative lifestyle, now they are seeking to be part of an organization," said Cugno. "They were seeking to avoid the draft, now they want the benefits and entitlements."

Other changes he has seen include the increase in women in the Guard - up to 17 percent of the force is female - and the strength of the aviation units has become more robust, he said.

"The infrastructure modernization has been very positive," said Cugno. "There are now more positions for females. And since 9/11, everything has changed."

"Technology has also become much more user friendly over the years. Training for fields like aviation, engineers and medical have improved greatly. The emergency operations we have available to the governor are immeasurable."

Cugno said he had two main goals when he took over the position of adjutant general: to improve communications to and with the organization and the community and to take care of the Guard members' families.

He feels he has succeeded in both areas.

"The *Connecticut Guardian* (begun in March 2000) has become a great vehicle to share the exciting things we do in the Guard," said Cugno. "I'm leaving the Guard with the National Guard Foundation and the best Family Support Program in the country."

He is also proud of the way he and his staff have been working and fighting to rebuild the Connecticut Guard's infrastructure by fighting for state and federal resources and dollars.

In the past four-and-a-half years as adjutant general, Cugno and his staff have succeeded in bringing more than \$150 million into the state, some of which has already been used and some of which will be realized during the next seven years.

"It's all been monumental," said Cugno. The money and resources have impacted such areas as repairs to existing armories, adding

female latrines, updating b and bringing facilities n Americans with Disabilities

In addition, buildings at down and replaced with st as Building 32 (billeting) and the new warehouse f have been added at vario state. The 103rd Air Contr into new and updated fac months.

Both companies of the have new or vastly impro

In fact, one of Cugno's was the dedication of the Ranch, a project that he finish and will provide st the two firefighting unit state.

Cugno said that after Soldiers and Airmen of t second responsibility is to serves.

"When possible, we ha dollars by promoting j components, thereby mi for the facility," said Cugno buildings we don't need l as the facility at Brainard

And while he has ac modernization of the infra would have liked to have

"Infrastructure should n Ground has been brok Kennel in Newtown. C forward to the "monum schoolhouse at Camp Re Leadership Regiment's billeting.

It hasn't been all finan waged over the years. H various legislative comm federal levels for additi Airmen, retirees, veterans have Connecticut get its C in the plan as possible.

Guard stay on the Family

"You need to continue to worthy of the contributi organization," said Cugno

"You also need to contin and the legislature on the can't be an 'Oh them' atti time commitment. You h improved benefits. You h families - they are the Guardsmembers and the entitlement and every rec

But Cugno said he didn has on his own. He said of advice over the years t stead throughout his care

"I received very sound on basic leadership thin anyone to do anything y



Maj. Gen William A. Cugno accepts the flag of the Connecticut National Guard from then-Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David W. Gay during change of command ceremonies in 1999. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)

8-year career

boilers, replacing leaky roofs into compliance with the ...ies Act.

Camp Rell have been torn ...ate-of-the-art facilities such ... Col. Nett Leadership Hall ... facility. Training pavilions ... training sites around the ... Squadron will be moving ...ilities during the next few

Governor's Horse Guard ...ved facilities.

last acts as adjutant general ...e new firehouse at Stone's ... saw through from start to ...ate-of-the-art facilities for ...s he has brought into the

his reponsibility to the ...he Connecticut Guard, his ...the communities the Guard

ave capitalized on federal ...oint usage with Reserve ...imizing state dollars used ...cugno. "We have also turned ...ack over to the state, such ...Airport."

omplished much in the ...rastructure, there is much he ...finished.

remain a priority," he said. ...ken for the Working Dog ...cugno said he is looking ...mental" project to build a ...ll that will house the 169th ...classrooms, offices and

cial fights that Cugno has ...e has also testified before ...ittees at both the state and ...onal benfits for Soldiers, ...s and families. He fought to ...Civil Support Team as early ...He would like to see the ...Support Program.

build a family environment ...ns they are making to this ...o.

ue to educate the governor ...capabilities of the Guard. It ...tude. It can never be a part- ...ave to continue to fight for ...ave to keep fighting for our ...future of our Guard. Our ...ir families deserve every ...ognition they get."

"I't accomplish the things he ...he received several pieces ...that have held him in good ...eer.

advice in my junior years ...ngs such as never asking ...ou wouldn't do yourself,"

he said. "That has stayed with me throughout the years. You also need to level the playing field. Everyone must be treated the same: male-female; black-white. It doesn't matter. Everyone gets the same chance. Having received the Roy Wilkinson Award from the NAACP was one of my proudest awards. You need to ensure equality, fairness and opportunities for all."

Cugno said he would sit down with his successor to brief him or her on what has been done and what needs to be finished.

Among the items he would discuss would be "the things that worked, the things that didn't work," said Cugno. "I'd discuss NGB issues, BRAC, Force Structure, infrastructure and Family."

But when asked what he felt his greatest accomplishment, either professionally or personally, was, without hesitation he said his kids.

"I have two great kids, my daughters," he said with tears of pride filling his eyes. "I'm very proud of them. As a parent, nothing makes you happier than your children being happy, healthy and successful. I am so proud of them. They have had to sacrifice a lot over the years, and they have had to put up with a lot. They are, without a doubt, my single greatest accomplishment in spite of a 38-year military career."

Cugno did caution Guardsmembers and those close to them to remember there are still Connecticut units overseas, and others getting ready to go.

"There are 275 Guardsmen deployed right now, with 500 more on alert," said Cugno. "We expect another 600 in the next six months. You can plan on 40 - 50 percent of the Connecticut Guard within the next year-and-a-half. We need to continue to work to take care of them and our families."

Cugno has no plans to go to work right away. He wants to take some time for his family and himself. It's been a busy 38 years.

He's grown from a 19-year-old second lieutenant leading a platoon in Vietnam, to a seasoned major general with the Silver Star, Legion of Merit and Bronze Star leading Soldiers and Airmen as they prepare to go off to a far different kind of war, one fought close to home and overseas.

He has seen many changes that have improved infrastructure and benefits for the Soldiers, Airmen, veterans, retirees and families of the Connecticut National Guard.

He has seen Black Hawks and horses brought into Connecticut. He has seen the field artillery, infantry units and even a brigade leave Connecticut.

He has seen more and more opportunities open up in the Guard for women and minorities.

He has seen ancient buildings torn down and modern facilities go up.

Would he do it again?

"I have been blessed to have been a part of all of this," he said. "I have been blessed to work with some of the greatest, most dedicated people around."

"I want to say thanks to everyone. Without question, thanks for all you've done. You've been outstanding. It's been an outstanding 38 years."



The Commander...with members of the TOPOFF/Ardent Sentry staff. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)



The Politician...with Congressman Rob Simmons. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)



The Family Supporter...Maj. Gen. William Cugno with Zoe Zampaglione at a Family Christmas Party. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)



The Leader...Maj. Gen. William Cugno welcomes home from Iraq members of the 247th Engineer Detachment at Fort Dix. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)

Recruiting & Retention: Mission One



(From Left) Sgt. Daniel Lacombe, Spc. Kenya Carnegie, Sgt. Andrew Peterson, and Spc James Lorello recite the oath of reenlistment on the balcony of the Republican Palace, which serves as the US Embassy Annex, Baghdad. The Soldiers are serving with the 143rd ASG, CTARNG. (Photo courtesy 143rd ASG)



Maj. Moira Carpenter administers the oath of reenlistment to Spc. Latanya Busby and Staff Sgt. Laura Cruz. The building concealing Saddam's secret bunker complex can be seen in the background. The Soldiers are members of the 143rd ASG, CTARNG. (Photo courtesy 143rd ASG)

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June 26

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BNCOC graduates told to wake up with a 'Hooah!' every morning

SPC. JORDAN E. WERME
65TH PCH

In a ceremony held at Col. Robert B. Nett Leadership Hall, Camp Rell, April 17, the 169th Leadership Regiment graduated 31 Soldiers



Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Daniel Norkun spoke to the graduates of their new responsibilities. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)

from Phase One of the Basic Non-Commissioned Officer's Course.

During the ceremony, the graduating NCOs were addressed by Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Daniel G. Norkun, Jr., who recently retired from the Connecticut Guard after a 39-year military career, and Col. Louis Preziosi, chief of staff, joint force headquarters and former regimental commander of the 169th.

Norkun stressed to the graduates the areas he feels every NCO should possess.

"The Guard is always going to need outstanding leaders and NCOs," said Norkun. "Right now you're coming out of school, go back to your unit and be a ball of fire. Your unit is going to expect something of you. They're going to expect that you've learned to be a good NCO, now start utilizing those skills that you've learned. As a leader you need to bring fun back to the Guard. As a leader you need to display an outstanding attitude, as it can become [contagious] in your unit. Wake up with a 'HOOAH!' every morning!"

Norkun was followed by Preziosi, who quoted Major Gen. Fredrick von Steuben's thoughts on the value of the NCO in the United States military.

"I came across an enlightening passage from an 1894 drill manual, concerning the selection and training of NCOs," said Preziosi. "The choice of non-commissioned officers

is an object of the greatest

importance. The order and discipline of the regiment depends so much upon their behavior, that too much care cannot be taken by selecting only those who, by their merit and good conduct, are entitled to it.' What was true in the age

of muskets and bayonets is still true in the age of cruise missiles and airborne cavalry."

As part of the graduation proceedings, Sgt. David Earle was presented with the Sergeants Major Council Award for demonstrating excellence in leadership and academics during BNCOC.

In addition, as part of a renewed tradition, Earle was presented with the NCO Sword, a replica of the sword carried by NCOs during the Mexican, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars. The sword will be presented at each subsequent graduation to the Soldier who best demonstrates all of the Army values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Earle will hold the sword until he presents it



Sgt. David Earle receives the NCO Sword from State Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaury. Earle received the sword as the student who demonstrated outstanding leadership and scholarship. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)

to the next Soldier to earn the honor.

Awards were also given to Sgt. Steven Carpenter, for excellence in academics, and Staff Sgt. Elaine T. Andrew, as the outstanding BNCOC instructor of the cycle.

BNCOC is a training requirement for any Soldier wishing to achieve an enlisted rank above sergeant. The course was recently modified to include more training without increasing the length of the course. During the 12-day course, each Soldier receives more than 90 hours of classroom training, preparing the advancing NCO in several areas, including Soldier training, subordinate counseling and unit retention, among several other subjects.



The 2005 graduating Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course class listens to one of the speakers during ceremonies at Nett Hall. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)

Military Matters



Preventing Credit Card and Identity Theft

Whether you've misplaced a credit card or had a purse or wallet stolen, the loss of personal identification and financial information can be a major concern. The number of people who have their identities stolen every year is growing, and countless more suffer credit card loss or theft.

Knowing the right precautions to take can help safeguard your financial freedom and prevent devastating losses to your cash reserves and credit rating.

Try these suggestions to deter financial and personal ID thieves:

- Make a list of all your credit cards, accounts and memberships. Write down the company name, account number, address and toll-free phone number, and store this list in a safe, secret place, not on your person. Be sure to add any new cards or accounts you obtain to this list.
- Handle Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) carefully. Never carry a written PIN with you. Create unique PINs (don't use your birth date, any part of your name or maiden name, Social Security Number or anything else that could be easily identified by thieves), and memorize them.
- Sign the back of any new credit card in permanent ink or write "Ask for Identification" to prevent unauthorized

persons from using your card.

- Carry only those cards that are necessary for any trips you're making. Try to carry these cards separately from your wallet or purse if you can, in a zippered compartment, secure pocket or small pouch, for example.
- Never give a clerk or cashier any personal information when using your credit cards. By law, you are not required to give out this information. Also, if you are paying by check and the cashier requires a credit card as identification, don't allow the cashier to write down your credit card number on your check.
- Ask your department of motor vehicles to issue you a random license number rather than using your Social Security Number.
- Watch your card carefully during the transaction. Be sure other shoppers cannot read the card. Don't allow the cashier to take your card away from the register, and get your card back as quickly as possible.
- Never sign a blank receipt. Draw a line through any blank spaces. Be sure the total box is filled in.
- Shield your card and the ATM monitor whenever you use a cash machine. Also, shield your card and the telephone whenever you use a calling card.
- Never lend your card to anyone.
- Cancel all unnecessary cards that you

don't plan to use. Call the issuer to request that the card be cancelled, and then cut up the card in several pieces. Have the issuer verify your request in writing.

- Use a crosscut shredder to destroy all credit card and ATM receipts, bills, check carbons and account statements after you have verified their accuracy. Also, remember to destroy unsolicited pre-approved credit card applications that arrive in the mail.

- Check your monthly billing and account statements promptly when they arrive. Reconcile these accounts and resolve any disputes with card issuers, financial institutions and vendors as necessary. Remember that you have the right to withhold payment for any disputed amount without incurring penalty fees until the card issuer can investigate the matter and render a decision.

- Check your credit reports at least once a year. Request a credit report from the three main credit reporting agencies (typical cost is \$8 a report):

- o Equifax: (800) 685-1111
- o Experian: (888) 397-3742
- o TransUnion: (800) 888-4213

- Unless the company or vendor is a

familiar, reputable one you can trust, never give out any account numbers over the phone. This is especially important if someone else made the call. If you feel the call is legitimate, ask the caller for a number where you can call them back, or ask that they mail you more information. If you're not sure about the company, check with your local Better Business Bureau.

- Have your name removed from marketing and junk-mail lists. This can cut down on the number of unsolicited credit card applications (which can be easily stolen) you receive via mail. Call (888) 5-OPT-OUT for details.

- Check to see if your homeowner's insurance policy covers liability for credit card theft. If it doesn't, consider upgrading your policy to provide this coverage.

- Consider a credit card registration service. Many companies offer card protection or registration services that automatically notify all creditors on your behalf after you report the loss or theft of your cards via a special toll-free number. Annual costs vary from \$10 to more than \$35.

By following these tips and safeguarding your credit cards and personal information, you should be able to drastically reduce the risk of identity theft.

Education Essentials: *Troops to Teachers* program overview

Background

Troops to Teachers (TTT) was established in 1994 as a Department of Defense program. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000 transferred the responsibility for program oversight and funding to the U.S. Department of Education but continued operation by the Department of Defense.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides for the continuation of TTT through Fiscal Year (FY) 2006.

TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), Pensacola, Florida.

Goal and Objectives

Reflecting the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the primary objective of TTT is to help recruit quality teachers for schools that serve low-income families throughout America.

TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other high-needs subject areas, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Current Status

Funding has been appropriated for FY 2005 to provide financial assistance to eligible participants, provide placement assistance, referral services, and maintain a network of state offices. Military personnel interested in a second career in public education may submit a registration form to DANTES.

Program Function

The purpose of TTT is to assist eligible military personnel to transition to a new career as public school teachers in "high-need" schools. A network of State TTT Offices has been established to provide participants with counseling and assistance regarding certification requirements, routes to state certification, and employment leads. The TTT homepage provides information and resource links, including a job referral system to allow participants to search for job vacancies as well as links to state Departments of Education, state certification offices, model resumes, and other job listing sites in public education.

Pending availability of funds, financial assistance may be provided to eligible

individuals as stipends up to \$5K to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10K to teach in schools serving a high percentage of students from low-income families. Participants who accept the Stipend or Bonus must agree to teach for three years in schools that serve students from low-income families in accordance with the authorizing legislation.

Eligibility

Educational and Service eligibility requirements for Referral and Placement Assistance services and Financial Assistance are outlined on the reverse side of this Overview and are also available on the TTT Home Page at www.ProudToServeAgain.com. Also available is a "Self Determination Guide" to quickly assess eligibility.

Registration

Register with Troops to Teachers by contacting your base Education Center/ Navy College Office or download a registration from the TTT Home Page. Eligible active duty and reserve personnel

may register with Troops to Teachers at any time. Counseling and information are available to all participants, however, financial assistance may not be provided to active duty personnel until one year prior to retirement.

Contact the DANTES Troops to Teachers office regarding questions about eligibility or services offered.

Information

For more information about Troops-to-Teachers, write or call:

Address:

DANTES Troops to Teachers
6490 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32509-5243

Phone: 850-452-1241

Toll Free: 1-800-231-6242

DSN: 922-1241

Home Page:

<http://www.ProudToServeAgain.com>

E-Mail: ttt@voled.doded.mil

State Placement Assistance Offices: For a listing of the State Offices, call DANTES or visit the Home Page at the above address.



CHIEF MASTER SGT.
WANDA WAWRUCK

Enlisted Update

Recognition, Thanks and Remembrance

Spring has sprung, and I hope this time of year finds everyone healthy and enjoying the New England thaw! As we begin to enjoy the warmer weather, this is a special time to celebrate, give thanks, and remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

First, I'd like to congratulate the Wing in successfully accomplishing their recent Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). A lot of hard work and attention to detail went into the preparation and execution. This was evident in the words of the Inspector General who repeatedly commented that the "professional and positive attitudes" of our Airmen were noteworthy.

In addition, many individual Airmen and teams were recognized for their superior performance.

We look forward to recognizing them publicly during the Wing recognition ceremony scheduled for May UTA.

And certainly noticeable were the smiling faces of our Family Support team who served beverages and snacks for our Airmen. Lastly, a special thanks to our retired Chiefs who lent an extra-hand to our Airmen; Chiefs Seitz, Gillanders, and Goguen...great job and thanks for your continued service!

By the time this Guardian has been published and distributed, the members from the Air Control Squadron (ACS) should have begun moving into their new facility. A project many years in the making is finally coming to fruition.

During the May UTA, ACS will focus on packing their equipment and people from their temporary location at Camp Rell and prepare to deploy to the Cape.

Having been temporarily displaced for many months, the training they will achieve during their deployment will bring them back to a mission-ready state.

We appreciate the tremendous support the staff at Camp Rell provided our Airmen during this transition period.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to announce two additional State awards recently achieved by our Airmen in the

categories of Junior Officer of the Year and Command Chief Award recipients, respectively; they are: Capt Guy Marino, 103 Air Control Squadron and Senior Airman Keith Gunther, 103 Air Control Squadron. CONGRATULATIONS!

May is also a time when we celebrate Mother's Day and Memorial Day. I'm sure every person has a story they can tell on how one of these holidays touches them. In whatever manner you celebrate Mother's Day, please remember the Moms who are currently serving our country and the children that await their safe return, as well as the Moms that await the return of their sons and daughters.

Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day, first began 30 May 1868 to recognize and decorate the graves of those who served in the Civil War.

In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson, declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day. Waterloo was chosen because they were the first town that had made Memorial Day an annual, community-wide event during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

Today, we recognize all our veterans with parades, celebrations, time off and services at many of our cemeteries.

It is also customary that our President or Vice-president provide a speech honoring the contributions of our fallen and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Likewise, many of our military leaders will follow suit by providing speeches at parades and town celebrations.

This is also a time to remember our service members who continue to serve in hostile areas all over the world.

In addition, let us not forget the families and employers who continue to carry the torch on the home front, awaiting their safe return.

Continue to keep our service members in your thoughts and prayers.

From my family to you and yours, we wish you the happiest of holidays as you celebrate Mother's Day and Memorial Day. I look forward to seeing you at the Armed Forces Day Luncheon.

Guard Voices

Happy Mother's Day

This is for the mothers who have sat up all night with sick toddlers in their arms, wiping up barf laced with Oscar Mayer wieners and cherry Kool-Aid saying, "It's okay honey, Mommy's here."

Who have sat in rocking chairs for hours on end soothing crying babies who can't be comforted.

This is for all the mothers who show up at work with spit-up in their hair and milk stains on their blouses and diapers in their purse.

For all the mothers who run carpools and make cookies and sew Halloween costumes. And all the mothers who DON'T.

This is for the mothers who gave birth to babies they'll never see. And the mothers who took those babies and gave them homes.

This is for the mothers whose priceless art collections are hanging on their refrigerator doors.

And for all the mothers who froze their buns on metal bleachers at football or soccer games instead of watching from the warmth of their cars.

And that when their kids asked, "Did you see me, Mom?" they could say, "Of course, I wouldn't have missed it for the world," and mean it.

This is for all the mothers who yell at their kids in the grocery store and swat them in despair when they stomp their feet and scream for ice cream before dinner. And for all the mothers who count to ten instead, but realize how child abuse happens.

This is for all the mothers who sat down with their children and explained all about making babies. And for all the (grand) mothers who wanted to, but just couldn't find the words.

This is for all the mothers who go hungry, so their children can eat.

For all the mothers who read "Goodnight, Moon" twice a night for a year. And then read it again. "Just one more time."

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to tie their shoelaces before they started school. And for all the mothers who opted for Velcro instead.

This is for all the mothers who teach their sons to cook and their daughters to sink a jump shot.

This is for every mother whose head turns automatically when a little voice calls "Mom?" in a crowd, even though they know their own offspring are at home — or even away at college or have their own families.

This is for all the mothers who sent their kids to school with stomach aches, assuring

them they'd be just FINE once they got there, only to get calls from the school nurse an hour later asking them to please pick them up. Right away.

This is for mothers whose children have gone astray, who can't find the words to reach them.

For all the mothers who bite their lips until they bleed when their 14-year-olds dye their hair green.

For all the mothers of the victims of recent school shootings, and the mothers of those who did the shooting.

For the mothers of the survivors, and the mothers who sat in front of their TVs in horror, hugging their child who just came home from school, safely.

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to be peaceful, and now pray they come home safely from a war.

What makes a good Mother anyway? Is it patience? Compassion? Broad hips?

The ability to nurse a baby, cook dinner, and sew a button on a shirt, all at the same time?

Or is it in her heart?

Is it the ache you feel when you watch your son or daughter disappear down the street, walking to school alone for the very first time?

The jolt that takes you from sleep to dread, from bed to crib at 2 A.M. to put your hand on the back of a sleeping baby?

The panic, years later, that comes again at 2 A.M. when you just want to hear their key in the door and know they are safe again in your home?

Or the need to flee from wherever you are and hug your child when you hear news of a fire, a car accident, a child dying?

The emotions of motherhood are universal and so our thoughts are for young 20 mothers stumbling through diaper changes and sleep deprivation...

And mature mothers learning to let go.

For working mothers and stay-at-home mothers.

Single mothers and married mothers.

Mothers with money, mothers without.

This is for you all. For all of us...

Hang in there. In the end we can only do the best we can. Tell them every day that we love them. And pray and never stop being a mom.

"Home is what catches you when you fall - and we all fall."

(Editor's Note: This was sent via email and the author was not identified.)

Send Letters to the Editor to:
Editor, Connecticut Guardian, National Guard Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795
or by email to: ctguardian@ct.ngb.army.mil
All letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.
Letters may be edited for grammar, spelling and space, but not for content.

Happy Mother's Day

Homefront

In defense of Connecticut's children: *Reflections from Iraq*

STAFF SGT. JASON HOULE
DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION NCO

In a world where the only constant is change, it can be difficult to adapt to the times.

Today's military is no different. Service members have taken the oath for a myriad of reasons; some to pay for school, some to learn valuable skills, some to serve our country or some for additional income.

Whatever the reason, many Soldiers never thought that they would be asked to serve in a combat zone, simply because they believed they joined a peacetime army.

Many Soldiers have deployed to the Middle East and many more will follow; all will return, but not all will reunite with their loved ones. It can be difficult for family to accept such a great loss for a cause that they may or may not agree with, but there is great honor in their sacrifice.

They helped to provide freedom to those that suffered under great tyranny; they worked, slept, fought and bled with their second family. They formed bonds that can only be forged under the direst of circumstances.

These brave souls persevered in the harshest environment imaginable and should be remembered for what they gave and not for what was taken.

The sights, sounds, smells and feelings a deployed Soldier experiences will forever change him. He will leave a piece of himself in the country that he visited, but he will also take a piece of the country home with him.

It can be difficult to meld into "civilization" and the transition can provide new challenges. You are no longer in a close-knit environment, you are back to your own freedom and responsibility or lack thereof.

Time does not heal all wounds, but I have found that it is best to get back to life as best you know and make your way through that path. Memories will remain and they will visit you from time to time, positive and negative.

Before I deployed I worked with Connecticut's youth and after deployment, I was fortunate enough to return to my position with the Counterdrug Program.

For those of you that have not worked with children, few endeavors are more challenging or more rewarding. My time with the children provided me with a foundation for dealing

with my squad members and with the people I came into contact with.

At one time or another, everyone will have a problem. They may or may not come to you with the problem, but there is a guaranteed way to ensure that they do not come to you a second time.

If you fail to empathize with them and treat them with the common respect every individual is entitled, you will have done a great discredit to the responsibility that you hold as well as to that person.

It does not matter if that person is an American or a third country national, an adult or a child. If you are responsible for some facet of their existence, you owe them the care that you would expect if you were in their shoes.

Whether it is a shoulder to cry on when a fellow platoon member falls silent from a rocket, or an attentive ear for financial problems that seems life threatening, or you may have to address one of many interpersonal issues that arise from working and living in the same space for an extended period of time.

Those that have been deployed know the

look of freedom in an oppressed people's eyes.

You can see the ray of hope shine through the door that has been opened. The path is not short or easy, but the "right" path is rarely short and easy.

It is important to focus on the long-term goal as opposed to the short news worthy clips.

Through it all, I have learned that youth throughout the world are very much the same. They all want attention, they all want to be treated with respect and they will all call you "Mistah."

The simple phrase can take you from Iraq, to a day working with neighborhood youth or from a visit to a Connecticut school to a newly built clinic being opened in Iraq.

If you have any questions about Drug Free events or Educational & Leadership Programs please call @860-493-2724 and ask for 1st. Lt. Christopher Morgan.



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6:00 P.M.
MAY 21, 2005
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56th Annual

DATE: May 20, 2005
TIME: 11:00 a.m. - Social Noon - Lunch
For reservation information, call 860-493-2750, 493-2758, 493-2762

TICKETS: \$25.00

Armed Forces Day Luncheon

Forward-deployed troops offered chance to show Mom they care

SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2005 - Servicemembers in remote locations may be wondering how they're going to get even a simple Mother's Day card to dear old Mom this year.

Cardstore.com, a partner in DoD's America Supports You campaign, has the answer to that dilemma.

The company is offering forward-deployed troops in Afghanistan and Iraq the opportunity to send their moms a Mother's Day card at no cost.

Just by logging into the company's Web site and taking a few simple steps, starting with picking a card, servicemembers in the two countries can send their mothers a traditional paper greeting card from wherever they may be this Mother's Day.

Servicemembers choose a card, write a message and then tell Cardstore.com when the card should be mailed. The company prints a "high-quality greeting card" and sends it through the U.S. Postal Service.

"They can actually put a photograph of

themselves on the face of the card," said Al Hulvey, Cardstore.com's chief executive officer. "They can make it a very personal kind of touch to their mothers."

A special code is needed to access this offer on the company's Web site. Servicemembers serving abroad can find the code in ads that will appear in Middle East editions of the Stars & Stripes newspaper beginning today. Three of those ads will run over the course of a week.

The Emeryville, Calif.-based online greeting card company was looking for a way to reach out and do some good, Hulvey said. He said company officials realized what troops give up while they're deployed in regard to maintaining communication with loved ones.

"When we looked at helping, reaching out and doing something for a group of people, ... we looked at where there was a need and where we could bring our business concept to really help in that process," Hulvey said. "It's obvious that the military folks are sacrificing a lot for this country and it's very difficult for them to ... keep in touch with the people they care about."



It just seemed like a natural thing for the company to do, he said.

The America Supports You team is excited about Cardstore.com's support of the troops.

"We are thrilled that Cardstore.com has joined the team and is supporting our military men and women in the Middle East," Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Allison Barber said in a joint America Supports You/Cardstore.com press release. "We applaud them for helping troops stay in touch with their families back home through this unique Mother's Day opportunity."

Orders can be placed from now till May 8, Mother's Day. To guarantee on-time delivery, orders need to be placed no later than May 2, Hulvey said.

"Our troops are sacrificing for this country, and I think that, although everyone generally appreciates that, I think it's important for people to sort of get out of the bleachers and really do something about that. We just feel really honored that we can do this."



INFORMATION

Security Begins With You!

The success of America's campaign against terrorism depends on you. Don't help America's enemies plan another attack. Use secure communications when discussing classified or sensitive information. Handle and discard memos, documents, correspondence and e-mails appropriately. Practice good computer security when accessing the Internet. Our enemies are using the way we've encouraged before. Don't overstep with information that can harm us.

OFFICERS CLUB OF CONNECTICUT

Hartford, CT (860) 249-3634



MAY 2005



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Orthodox Easter	2	3	4 5-7 Pitney Bowes Hooray, Hooray, The 4th of May: Outdoor running starts today	5 Cinco de Mayo Special Menu 6 PM Hartford Courant Awards Dinner	6 Dory Mental Health Luncheon Club closed for lunch	7
8 Mother's Day Brunch Delicious Buffet w/ Carving Stations Reservations (860) 249-3634	9	10	11	12 Softball Tournament	13	14 NG DRILL
15 NG DRILL	16 Victoria Day (Canada)	17	18	19	20	21 Armed Forces Day
22	23	24	25 5 PM PCSW Dinner	26	27 600PM Annual Clambake Reservation a must 249-3634	28
29 Parade CTA/RNG Box Lunch	30  Memorial Day CLUB CLOSED	31	Mothers Day Brunch May 8 Clambake May 27th Call Now 249 - 3634.			

O'Club open for lunch daily 1130 - 2PM
Bar & Lounge open at lunch and 4PM - close
Look for Saul's Specials every day (Email available)




OFFICERS CLUB OF CONNECTICUT

Presents

ANNUAL CLAM BAKE

Friday, May 27, 2005, 6:30 pm


\$24.95 per person




\$30.95 (w/ lobster)

Chef Saul will have a special menu including , Boiled Lobster, Mussels (steamed in White Wine), Red Potatoes, Corn on the cob, in a String bag together with Pasta w/ sundried Tomatoes Grilled Chicken, Raw Bar, a Salad Bar and Roast Beef (for the faint at heart)New England Clam Chowder, Lobster Bisque

Fresh Baked Breads Coffee, Tea, Milk



Strawberry Festival Desserts



Reservations only (860) 249-3634
(you need to order lobster in advance)

Guarding Your Rights

Legal Affairs: *Suspension of Favorable Personnel Action ("Flag")*

CAPT. TIMOTHY TOMCHO
JAG OFFICE

Army Regulation (AR) 600-8-2, "Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flags)," prescribes the policies, operating tasks and steps governing the suspension of favorable personnel actions as a function.

The regulation applies throughout the Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve. The regulation was updated this year, effective 23 January 2005.

Whenever a Soldier is under investigation, prosecution, pending adverse administrative actions or UCMJ action, AR 600-8-2 requires the commander to flag the Soldier's personnel records to prevent favorable personnel actions. The flag is a completed DA Form 268. Consult AR 600-8-2 for processing requirements and steps.

Favorable personnel actions include the following: appointment, reappointment, reenlistment, extension, promotion, permanent change of station (PCS) (except for APFT/Weight flags, which allow PCS), extension of active duty, assumption of

command, awards, retirement and schooling/training.

Reasons for flagging a Soldier include the following: the initiation of formal or informal military or civilian investigations against a Soldier, pending Connecticut Code of Military Justice (CCMJ) action, pending Administrative Memorandum of Reprimand (AMOR), rank reduction, involuntary separation, APFT or height/weight failure, referred OER while on the promotion list, other adverse administrative actions, and security violations, testing positive for substance abuse or being command referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program.

Commanders must inform the Soldier that a flag has been imposed. The Soldier cannot appeal a flag.

The flag is removed upon completion of the investigation, action, punishment or upon the filing of a referred evaluation report. Also, a flag is lifted on the day the proposed reprimand is signed by the commander — not when the filing determination is made.

A flag will be initiated immediately when a soldier's status changes from favorable to

unfavorable. Flagged Military Personnel Records jackets will be maintained in a restricted access area. Only those with a need to know of the flag will be informed of its existence. Active flag cases will be reviewed monthly. A flag will be removed immediately when a soldier's status changes from unfavorable to favorable.

A copy of the flag (DA Form 268) must be sent to Personnel Service Branch (PSB) for proper administrative processing of the Soldier's personnel actions.

The commander must also send a copy of the DA Form 268 which closes the flag when the Soldier's status changes.

The timely receipt of the closing flag at PSB is necessary, as flags are recorded on SIDPERS.

Favorable personnel action will continue to be suspended until the flag is properly removed by PSB from the Soldier's record. The proper administration of flags is crucial, as flags unduly left in place will stop a Soldier's upward career progression.



NGACT: Working for you



The National Guard Association of Connecticut has had another busy year.

We just held our annual conference and are preparing for the upcoming EANGUS and NGAUS conferences.

Our state conference, while poorly attended, was highly successful with some very dynamic speakers.

Originally scheduled as our keynote speaker, Congressman Rob Simmons had to cancel due to overseas travel arrangements, but he surprised us by stopping by for a few minutes late in the morning and gave a very motivating speech.

State Representatives Linda Orange and Len Greene both asked to come back this year as speakers after having spoken last year. EANGUS Area 1 Director, Tom Quinn, came in from New Jersey to address the membership about national initiatives. Brig. Gen. Dan Scace spoke on the state of the Guard, and was interrupted by a phone call from Iraq.

Sgt. Maj. Joe Aparo, 14rd ASG, an annual attendee, called to let everyone know that NGACT was being thought about by its members serving overseas.

Our keynote speaker for the day, Commissioner Dr. Linda Schwartz, gave an update on veterans benefits and legislation currently being discussed at the state and National levels.

Congressman Chris Shays addressed our dinner guests that night.

We also held our elections for several positions on the Board of Directors. Elected were: Army Officer: Gerry Lukowski; Air Officer: George Worrall; Air Enlisted: Sabrina Gilfurt; and Retiree: John Bednarz. We have vacancies for Army Enlisted, Air Officer-at-Large and Army Junior Enlisted. We are also looking for an Executive Director. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact President Bill Cusack at william.cusack@ct.ngb.army.mil or President-Elect Debbi Newton at debbi.newton@ct.ngb.army.mil.

Next year's annual conference will be held March 24 at a location yet to be determined. Please save the date.

Annual conferences are coming up fast. EANGUS will hold its 34th Annual Conference Aug. 21-24 in Orlando, Fla. We are looking at sending our largest contingent yet to this conference. The 2006 conference will be held Aug. 20-23 in Biloxi, Miss.

The 127th General Conference of NGAUS will be held Sept. 17-19 in Honolulu, HI. The 2006 NGAUS conference will be held Aug. 19-21 in New Orleans, La.

Finally, we are still accepting applications for our scholarship program. See the April issue of the *Guardian* for details.



RONALD E. LEE, 1ST SGT. (RET.) USAR
CT-ESGR PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN

Due to the limited space for ESGR issues, we were not able to address more of the concerns of National Guard and Reserve military members regarding employee/employer relations in your civilian job.

If you recall, the April issue dealt with the time requirements for returning to your civilian job. This article will continue along that same theme and address related questions.

We have been asked on several occasions, "What if (I/my spouse/my son or daughter) does not want to return to the job held prior to leaving for military duty? What should (I/he/she) do regarding their old boss?"

There are several ways of answering this question. If a member of the Guard or Reserve has been deployed and during that time they decided that they do not want to go back to their old job one can take several steps.

Let's begin by asking if you have a new job. If you have already found other employment and you know that you will never return to your old job then it is a personal decision as to whether or not you want to personally contact your employer and "give notice" that you will not be returning.

This decision may be based on your

More 'Did you know...?'

relationship before you left, the amount and kind of support (or lack thereof) that your employer afforded you and/or your family while you were gone, or on the type of employment.

You must remember that once you sever a work relationship by "burning your bridges" you might not ever be able to restore a relationship with your old employer or get a positive work reference.

You may want to consider how your employer may affect future employment and act according when deciding if you should give notice or merely walk away.

If you haven't found that new job yet it may make better sense financially, etc. to go back to your old job while you continue your search.

Jobs are hard to find in today's economy and as they say, "A bird in hand is better than one in the bush." You want to protect your reputation and credibility as an employee.

We were also asked about jobs or positions that you may have been in the process of testing for when you were called away.

Legally you were not an employee so the employer does not have to bring you back into the hiring process at the same position you were when you left.

However, some employers will be more understanding and may allow you to reapply

or continue with a process.

It all depends upon the job, statutory or collective bargaining contracts, or how supportive and understanding the employer may be.

In any case, it will not hurt to contact the hiring agency, explain your situation, and see what they will do for you.

This also applies to most schools, training institutes and to enrollment into military service academies.

Welcome back to "the world" and best wishes for returning to whatever it is that you choose to do.

If you have any questions of concerns do not hesitate to contact CT-ESGR by calling your Military Unit Liaison Representative or CT-ESGR Hq at 196 West Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, (860) 721-5901, e-mail: www.ctesgrlew@cox.net

Visit the
**Connecticut
Guardian**
online at
www.ct.ngb.army.mil

Inside OCS

OCS at Gettysburg – an historical perspective of the Principles of War

OC LAUREN J. SHARRON
OCS CLASS 50

One of the best experiences that I have had at Officer Candidate School thus far was our drill 1-3 April 2005. OCS Class 50 has been focusing on infantry tactics and the principles of war the past two months at drill as part of our training. Our class, nearing the end of our training in Officer Candidate School, took a staff ride to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to further our knowledge and get an historical perspective on the principles of war and infantry tactics. Joined by the Officer Candidates from Massachusetts and New Jersey, we toured the battlefields of Gettysburg from Day 1 of the battle through Day 3 of the battle.

On Saturday we took off from Fort Indiantown Gap and made our way down to the battlefields of Gettysburg. At the visitor's center, we toured the museum where there were vintage uniforms, weapons, and equipment used during the Civil War. It was so interesting to see how far we have come technologically with the weaponry and equipment used in warfare. Imagine using that type of weaponry in modern warfare today. Imagine a team going in to clear a room and having to reload their weapons after every shot. Imagine trying

to maneuver the long rifles that they used in the Civil War days through the doorway. It would be impossible to conduct the type of tactics that we use today with the weaponry of the Civil War.

After touring the museum we made our way into a small auditorium where we viewed an electronic map board exercise. The man running the exercise went through the battle from Day 1 through Day 3. This enabled us to get a better understanding and view of how the Union Army and the Confederate Army positioned themselves for battle. This is where we were able to see how Civil War infantry tactics differed from modern warfare tactics. During the Civil War, the Soldiers would line up and march towards their objective. In today's warfare we are more apt to use the cover of darkness to attack our enemies. We can fight at night due to the equipment and technology that we have today. Once darkness started to set in, the Soldiers of the Civil War were unable to fight. They had no way to communicate since they had no radios; they did all of their communication through couriers, voice, music and using their colors. They had no way to see in the darkness without Night Vision Goggles and other equipment such as that. They did not have tracking devices,



OCS Class 50 and its cadre on Little Round Top, Gettysburg. In the picture from right to left front row first: OC Hibbert, OC Moran, OC Sharron, OC Phelan, OC Rossi, OC Gorham Back: Master Sgt. Graze, Sgt. 1st Class Tytor, Lt. Col. Duffey, Capt. Masterson (TAC), Capt. Steinke (SR TAC), Maj. Finkle, Capt. Hare and Maj. Weissenberg. (Photo courtesy of OCS Class 50)

tracers or other types of equipment that could allow them to fight in the darkness. They had to base their warfare on the equipment of the times.

The only time that I had been to Gettysburg was about fifteen years ago when I was a kid. Capt. Hare, a professor at Eastern Connecticut State University, and Master Sgt. (Ret.) Graze led the tour of Gettysburg for Connecticut and Massachusetts. Capt. Hare was very knowledgeable about all of the details of the battle. Master Sgt. Graze knew where every monument and mile stone was at Gettysburg. With the instruction of these two gentlemen, our tour of the battlefield was an experience I will never forget.

Each candidate had to read the book The Killer Angels before we went to Gettysburg. The candidates from each state were given an assignment to present to the other candidates and the staff when we were touring the battlefield. My assignment was


Day One of the battle from the Confederate perspective using the offensive principle of war. It was interesting how each candidate incorporated their principle of war into the battle through the eyes of the confederate and union generals and colonels.

On our final day at Gettysburg, the candidates from Massachusetts and Connecticut lined up on the battlefield and did a reenactment of Picket's Charge. It was absolutely incredible to see how it was done and to actually be able to do it. We all lined up behind our colors and made our way to the "clump of trees" where we finished our tour of Gettysburg. This was the best part of the entire tour.

This is definitely an experience I will never forget and I am sure that my fellow candidates all feel the same way.

If you are interested in sharing in these experiences, join OCS Class 51! Please call me at 860-917-3015.

**Do you have what it takes
to take your career to the next level?**




**1st Battalion (OCS), 169th Regiment
(LDR)**

**Officer Candidate School
Information Briefs:**

DATES
22 JAN 05
26 FEB 05
19 MAR 05
16 APR 05
21 MAY 05
25 JUN 05

*Bring a Friend, Spouse or Significant Other.
Information Brief will be in Building 402, Leadership Hall,
beginning at 1000 hours.*

For more information contact
1LT Shaun O'Dea
(860) 691-4216
shaun.odea@ct.ngb.army.mil





HELP WANTED

The 1st OCS BN, 169th Leadership Regiment is looking to fill the following vacancies for:
Phase I Annual Training at Camp Reil from 16-30 July 2005.
Phase III Annual Training at Ft. Benning from 11-25 June 2005.

AVAILABLE ADSW VACANCIES:

TAC's
INSTRUCTORS
SUPPLY SPECIALISTS
COOKS
KP PERSONNEL
DRIVERS
RTO's
ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALISTS
MEDICS

There are several available positions in each field.
If you are interested in filling any of the above vacancies please contact:

1LT Shaun O'Dea
169th Leadership Regiment
(860) 691-4216
shaun.odea@ct.ngb.army.mil

Health & Fitness



Medical Notes

COL. FRANK T. DiNUCCI
RN, COHN-S

I recently received an e-mail from someone requesting information about histoplasmosis, apparently he had been diagnosed with histoplasmosis.

With spring upon us and many people doing spring cleaning and gardening, I thought this would be a timely subject.

Histoplasmosis is also referred as Histoplasma capsulatum or H. capsulatum is a fungus that is found in soil and bird droppings.

Soil rich in nitrogen has higher levels of H. capsulatum. H. capsulatum cannot be transmitted from person to person; the only way one can come down with the disease is by direct contact from H. capsulatum. A person is exposed to the H. capsulatum spores contained in dust when they inhale the spores into the lungs. Most people who are exposed have no immediate symptoms.



Histoplasmosis

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), symptoms start to appear 3-17 days after exposure and appear as mild flu like symptoms.

Acute H. capsulatum will show up on chest X-rays. If the disease persists, the person could develop Chronic Lung Disease.

In some severe cases H. capsulatum could spread to other parts of the body such as to the eyes and cause visual problems.

Anybody working in areas that have a high concentration of H. capsulatum spores are subject to contracting the disease.

Anybody with a compromised immunity system or chronic lung disease, has a higher chance for developing the disease.

According to the CDC the following vocations are at a higher risk for exposure to H. capsulatum: bridge inspector or painter, chimney cleaner, demolition worker, farmer, gardener, Heating and air conditioning system installer or service person,

microbiology laboratory worker, pest control worker, restorer of historic or abandoned buildings, roofer, and cave explorer.

According to the CDC mild cases of H. capsulatum will resolve and do not require any treatment. In severe cases antifungal medications must be given, severe cases left untreated, could result in death.

A number of steps can be taken to protect you from exposure. Prevent the spread of dust by wetting the area you are working in this will reduce the chances of inhalation. Appropriate respirator protection will decrease inhalation of the spores.

The information for this article came directly from the CDC, you can find much more information by going on line: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod>, or you can call the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH) at (800) 356-4674.

Tricare begins enrollment for new Reserve Healthcare Benefit

SGT. 1ST CLASS DOUG SAMPLE, USA
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, April 27, 2005 - Thousands of Reserve and Guard servicemembers can now qualify to purchase more healthcare coverage for themselves and their families under a new Tricare program that began April 26.

Tricare, the military's health care provider, is now accepting enrollment for its new Tricare Reserve Select health plan, said Steve Lillie, Tricare's deputy chief of operations.

Congress authorized the new healthcare benefit for Reserve Component members under the fiscal 2005 National Defense Authorization Act as a way of providing health coverage to RC members burdened by the current war. Lillie said the premium-based plan will be offered as an option to more than 400,000 eligible servicemembers who may want to purchase healthcare coverage.

For the most part, TRS helps make providing continuous health coverage a seamless process for servicemembers.

Lillie explained that after a servicemember is released from active duty, the Transitional Assistance Management Program then picks up their health coverage for 180 days, and if purchased, TRS coverage begins immediately afterwards.

To be eligible for TRS, servicemembers must have been called or ordered to active duty in support of a contingency operation since Sept. 11, 2001, and they must execute a "Service Agreement" through the Guard and Reserve Web Portal to serve in the Selected Reserves.

In addition, Guard members must have served "under an order from the president, not from their governor," Lillie explained. And they must have served continuously on active duty for 90 days or more under such an order, unless they were injured or became ill while activated.

He said servicemembers may be eligible for one year of health coverage for every year of service commitment in the service agreement, up to a maximum of one year for every 90 days of prior service on active duty in support of a contingency operation.

The Service Agreement through the Guard-Reserve portal is a vital first step in qualifying is to enter into continued service in the Selected Reserve. That is done through the member's Reserve unit. That Service Agreement must be executed between the member and the Reserve component before the member can purchase TRICARE Reserve Select coverage.

Fit for Life: Military struggling with rising health care costs

SGT. 1ST CLASS DOUG SAMPLE, USA
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

Rising medical costs and the expansion of health benefits for retirees, Guardsmen and Reservists, and their families, are putting a strain on the military health care system, Defense Department health and personnel officials told members of Congress April 21.

"Rising health care costs are not unique to the military health system; it's a national concern, and we are struggling with it," Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in testimony before the personnel subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

David S. C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, also testified at the hearing. He said rising costs can also be attributed to increased enrollment in TRICARE benefit programs.

Chu said improvements in TRICARE benefits have made the health plan "widely accepted" by servicemembers, retirees and their families.

And, he added, "others seek to join this program," referring to retirees over age 65, who joined TRICARE for Life, and Reservists, who can begin enrolling in TRICARE Reserve Select this month.

However, he said, the popularity of TRICARE programs has brought with it "substantial cost."

Winkenwerder pointed out that expenses for TRICARE have grown rapidly, doubling over the past five years from \$18 billion to nearly \$36 billion this year. If the current trend continues, the program's total budget could top \$50 billion within five years, he said.

By 2010, Winkenwerder estimated,

approximately "70 percent of the health budget will be spent caring for retirees."

"The facts show that our expansion of health benefits, such as those for our senior retirees, underlies the growth, and that growth could put today's operations and sustainment at risk," he said.

In addition, the expansion of health care benefits to retirees has led to increased pharmacy costs. Winkenwerder said the cost of TRICARE's pharmacy program has increased 500 percent since 2001, with costs approaching \$6 billion this year.

He said the department is trying to control some of those costs by implementing "performance-based" budgets and improving TRICARE's pharmacy program with a new formulary and using federal pricing for its retail pharmacy network.

In addition, he said, TRICARE contracts are now designed to "leverage private-sector methods" in order to control purchased health care costs.

Still, he added, management actions alone, even dramatic ones, "will not stem the rapid growth spending."

"That is because benefit expansion and rising utilization are the driving forces in sending these costs upward," he explained.

Winkenwerder said part of TRICARE's problem is that the program's benefit structure has not kept pace with changes in the private sector or industry. For example, enrollment fees and cost shares for TRICARE have not increased in a decade, he said.

Winkenwerder pointed out that while TRICARE cost shares have remained "unchanged" over the past five years, those for private health care firms have risen significantly. For instance, cost shares for

Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic region rose 57 percent, and those for Blue Cross Standard rose 87 percent.

"This has persuaded a growing number of our beneficiaries to drop their private coverage and to fully rely upon TRICARE," he said.

Winkenwerder cautioned the committee that the "low out-of-pocket costs and outstanding benefit" that TRICARE provides will drive "all of our retirees (to) rely on TRICARE instead of their employer-based plans in just a few years."

"Simply put, we face a tremendous challenge with a benefit design that does not always reward the efficient use of care," he said. "And that is increasingly out of step with employer plans."

However, he told the sub-committee, the department is looking at "viable options" to contain costs.

One possible option, according to Chu, would be establishing a health-savings plan for military families, similar to the one Congress authorized for DoD civil service employees. "We are looking hard at how you would offer (such a plan) on a voluntary basis - again, your choice - to military households," Chu said.

Chu said he has asked the department to look into the issue. Although, he added, such a plan would likely need statutory authority from Congress. "The military benefit is called out in a separate set of statutes and governed by those statutes," he said. "So if we were going to offer a thoughtful health-saving account plan we would need some additional statutory authority."

The Green Guard

Eastern Bluebirds

MELISSA TONI
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGER

This month's column focuses on one of the most loved and beneficial birds, the beautiful Eastern bluebird. Common throughout Connecticut in the early to mid-1800s, the Eastern bluebird declined in numbers from the late 1800s through the 1980s.

One significant contributing factor to this decline was the lack of suitable nesting cavities needed by the bluebird to successfully raise young. The lack of nesting cavities resulted from changes in land use and increased urbanization.

Introduced bird species such as European starlings also contributed to the bluebird decline due to increased competition for nesting areas.

Eastern bluebirds are small with large eyes and slender, short bills. Males have a bright blue back and a reddish-brown breast. The coloration of females is similar, although they are more pale and muted than the male.

The bird song is a beautiful melodious

whistling song that sounds like "chur chur-lee chur-lee." Both sexes sing, however the males sing most often from perches during breeding season.

The perch is usually close to the nesting site, sometimes right on top of a wooden bluebird nesting box.

Bluebirds typically prefer orchards, semi-open terrain, parklands, and other areas with short ground cover and scattered trees. They perch in the open and eat insects and spiders during spring and summer. Their diet changes to berries and fruits in the fall.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP) has started an Eastern Bluebird Restoration Program, of which the CTARNG is a participant.

The CT DEP donates rough-cut lumber to groups and agencies in return for nesting data. During 2003, the CT DEP donated enough wood for the CTARNG to construct twenty-two bluebird boxes (with a tremendous amount of help from Range Control). One nesting pair of bluebirds was

observed during the first year of the program, and these results were shared with the DEP.

Other bird species did inhabit the other boxes including black-capped chickadees and tree swallows. It was determined that only one box was successful in raising bluebirds because some boxes were not facing the correct direction and some were placed in locations that were simply not high-quality breeding areas.

These have since been moved to more promising locations. Data for 2005 will not be available for several months since breeding season has just recently begun.

Any landowner can participate in the CT DEP's reporting program. Session's Woods Wildlife Management Area in Burlington can be contacted at (860) 675-8130 and the CTDEP web-site also contains information on the program.

The North American Bluebird Society at www.nabluebirdsociety.org also has a wealth of information such as bluebird box specifications, habitat types, and background information.



Visit the
**Connecticut
Guardian**
on-line at
www.ct.ngb.army.mil

There is a New Face at HRO



To schedule an appointment for an ID Card or to update your DEERS information contact:

Senior Airman Amanda Douville at
860-878-6725 or email her at
Amanda.douville@ct.ngb.army.mil

The *Connecticut Guardian* will be taking a look back at the Guard's involvement in the Floods of 55 in August, the 50th anniversary of Mother Nature's devastation.

If you were in the Guard and involved in the clean-up, we'd like to hear from you.

If you are in the Guard now, and have memories of the devastation, we'd like to hear from you. We're also looking for any old photos you may have.

Please contact Sgt. 1st Class Debbi Newton at (860) 548-3251 or via email: debbi.newton@ct.ngb.army.mil



58th Annual Picnic & Reunion (Rain or Shine) 192d Field Artillery Battalion Association

Invitation to ALL former member 192d FA Bn. & ALL current members of 192d CM Bn.

To include: HHD 192 Cm Bn.; 103rd Chemical Co.; 134th Military Police Co.; 143rd Military Police Co.; 223rd Law & Order Detachment & Detachment 3 -27th Infantry Brigade.

Date: Sunday, July 10th, 2005

Place: Anthony's Lake Club, West Kenosia Ave., Danbury, Ct. 06810

Cost: \$32.00 (includes all day buffet- unlimited beverages)

Menu:

Breakfast: Hot coffee & Danish for early arrivals.

Luncheon: Hot dogs, hamburgers, liver/bacon & onions, and steamed clams & broth served from 10:00 A.M. 'til 12:00 noon.

Dinner: Steak sandwiches, meatballs, zittis, chicken, potatoes, salad, corn and watermelon.

Dues: \$5.00 for 2005-2006 membership (1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006)

! Advance dues and reservations payments are required for the 2005 reunion; please send in your annual dues and reservation check ASAP!

Send Reply to: Thomas Bria, 78 Sheephill Road Riverside, Ct 06878
Questions? Email: Jack.Duncan@us.army.mil

Directions: (From Hartford East) Take Rt 84 west. Get off at Exit 4. Turn right onto Rt. 6. Turn left at the 5th red light (Kenosia Avenue); go over small bridge; Take quick 1st right (West Kenosia Ave) go to end of the street.

Retirees' Voice

Anticipating a visit to West Point

Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) John Bednarz

This is the eve of our next trip to West Point for their annual Retiree Appreciation Day. The schedule includes a breakfast sponsored by the West Point chapter of AUSA, a welcome by the Superintendent, and some rousing music by the 'Hellcats' of the USMA Band. Guest speakers address Army programs and retiree benefits, and then we visit with Post and Civilian agencies (exchange, commissary, MWR, AUSA, medical and legal information, etc.)

After that, we assemble on the Plain for a Cadet Drill Team performance, the Cadet Review and then a USMA Sports Parachute Club jump. Once that is complete we report to the Cadet Mess where we dine with several cadets at each table.

A few interesting articles were included in the USMA Retiree Newsletter which

announced the upcoming open house at West Point.

The Connecticut Army Retirees Council (CARC), an organization of retired Army personnel established by CG, USMA conducts quarterly meetings at the Newington VA Health Care Center in Newington, Connecticut. In addition to discussing information of interest provided by the West Point RSO, and news obtained from the New England Army Retiree Council, they often have guest presenters that discuss relevant retiree issues.

When fully staffed the council is represented by 24 retired officers and enlisted personnel who are appointed to represent Connecticut retirees. The council has vacancies in the officer and enlisted ranks and if you're interested in becoming a member or just attending a meeting, contact Col. (Ret) Severio Fodera, Officer Co-Chair

at (203) 795-6948 or Sgt. Maj. (Ret) Nathan Zimmerman, Enlisted Co-Chair at (860) 567-3245. As the article notes, this is a chance to participate and communicate with the Army; a chance to analyze the decisions that affect us as retirees; and a chance to influence the policies and laws that affect Army retirees and their families.

The next article was an announcement of a Retiree Appreciation Day on August 27, 2005 at the Devens Reserve Forces Training Area, Fort Devens, Massachusetts. It will take place from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with registration and coffee from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. The item that caught my eye was that it specifically 'included Gray Area Retirees.' Normally announcements for retiree activity days and open houses do not go to Gray Area retirees because they are not on the mailing lists of the Retiree Service Offices. So, Gray Area folks, this is your formal invitation. In fact all services are invited, including Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and their Reserves.

The New England Army Retiree Council with the support of the Devens Reserve Forces Training Area and the Massachusetts National Guard sponsors this retiree Appreciation Day.

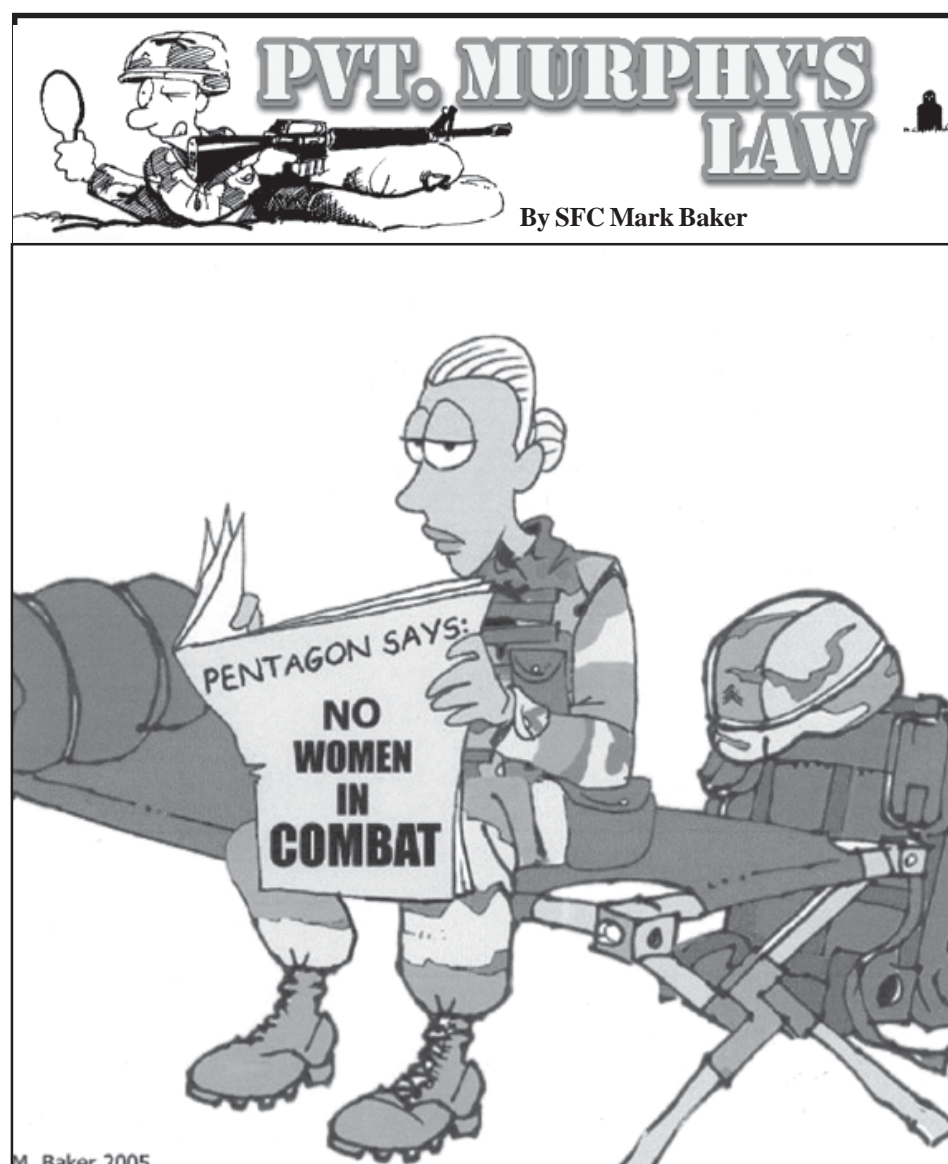
Postal Service to pay Guard members' health premiums

The U.S. Postal Service is agreeing to pay the employees' share (in addition to the Postal Service's share) of health insurance premiums for up to 24 months for career USPS employees who are called to active military duty. The change was made in response to a request from the American Postal Workers Union. The policy took effect March 17 and is retroactive to Dec. 28, 2002. It applies to qualified career employees of the Postal Service activated for military service under Executive Order 12302 or 13223 in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Postal Service will assume the full cost of employees' premiums for the time that they perform qualifying military service only.



2nd Louie

By Bob Rosenburgh



Connecticut National Guard Fulltime Employment Opportunities

The following are Connecticut Army and Air National Guard Technician openings. For a copy of the full Technician vacancy announcements, go to www.ct.ngb.army.mil and click on employment opportunities.

Army National Guard Technician Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing Date
Aircraft Mechanic (12 Vacancies)	AASF	WG-12	May 5, 2005
Aircraft Mechanic (Indef) (2 Positions)	AVCRAD	WG-11	May 5, 2005
Aircraft Mechanic	AASF	WG-10	May 10, 2005
Secretary	AASF	GS-05	May 12, 2005
Management Analyst (Temp)	DOIM	GS-09	May 12, 2005
Supply System Analyst (Excepted)	USPFO	GS-11	May 12, 2005
Supply System Analyst (Competitive)	USPFO	GS-11	May 12, 2005
Supervisory Supply Technician	USPFO (CIF)	GS-09	May 13, 2005
Electronic Integrated Systems Mechanic	AVCRAD	WG-12	May 16, 2005
Heavy Mobile Equipment Rep. Supervisor	FMS 8	WS-09	May 2, 2005
Heavy Mobile Equipment Rep. Supervisor	FMS 9	WS-09	May 18, 2005
Heavy Mobile Equipment Repairer	FMS 8	WG-09	May 26, 2005

Air National Guard Technician Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing Date
Support Services Assistant	103rd ACS	GS-05	April 27, 2005
Aircraft Pneudraulic Systems Mech.	103rd FW	WG-10	May 9, 2005
Deputy Mission Support Officer (Indef)	103rd FW	GS-13	May 13, 2005
Aircraft Electrician	103rd FW	WG-10	May 16, 2005
Aircraft Electrician (Indef)	103rd FW	WG-10	May 16, 2005
Electronics Mechanic (Indef)	103rd ACS	WG-11	May 20, 2005
Transportation Assistant	103rd FW	GS-06	May 27, 2005

Listed below are current openings in the Connecticut National Guard AGR program. For a copy of the Military Tour Vacancy Announcement, go the www.ct.ngb.army.mil and click on employment opportunities.

Army National Guard AGR Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
Production Recruiter	Recruiting CMD	SFC/E-7	Open AGR Nationwide
Supply Sergeant	Co A, 143rd FSB	E-5 to E-6	Open AGR Nationwide
Mil Pers Tech/Health Sys. Spec.	JFHQ-CT	W-4 and Below	Open On Board AGR Only
Supply Sergeant	712th Maint. HEM	E-4 to E-6	Open AGR Nationwide

Air National Guard AGR Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
Transportation Assistant	103rd FW	E-1 to E-5	Open AGR Nationwide

NOTE: Other positions with outdated closing dates are also listed on the website. Some of these positions are currently under consideration, and others may have their application dates extended. Keep checking the website and if you have any questions concerning outdated postings, call HRO at (860) 878-6739 or (860) 878-6729.

Temporary Technician Employment Opportunities

The Human Resource Office has Temporary Technician employment opportunities available throughout the State. We have a need for a variety of military specialties including Family Support Specialists, Administrative Support Personnel, Aircraft Mechanics, Finance Specialists, Heavy Equipment Mechanics and Operators, etc.

If you are a member of the Connecticut National Guard and are interested in one of these employment opportunities, please call the HRO Staffing Specialist at (860) 878-6739 or just submit an OF-612 and OF-306 directly to the HRO.

If sending your application directly please ensure you sign and date both forms, document all your civilian and military experience, list your daytime phone number and identify the type of Temporary Technician position you would be interested in filling.

Coming Events

- May

May 8

Mother's Day

May 15

Aviation Open House

AASF, Windsor Locks

May 20

Armed Forces Day Luncheon

May 21

Armed Forces Day

May 21

Aviation Ball

May 21

Family Program NY Bus Trip

May 30

Memorial Day
- June

June 14

Flag Day

June 18

Laugh With Dan

Fundraiser for CTNG Youth Group

June 19

Father's Day
- July

July 4

Fourth of July

July 10

192nd FA Bn. Assocaition

Reunion & Picnic

In future issues

- Armed Forces Day
- CTNG's New Senior Leadership
- ACS Deployments to Camp Edwards
- 50 Year Anniversary of the Floods of '55

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month previous to publication.

Postcards Home



CW4 Mike Behuniak and 1st Lt. Patrick Miller, members of Co B 1/189 Avn. in front of the HQ buildings of the 42nd ID in Tikrit, Iraq. (Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Patrick Miller)



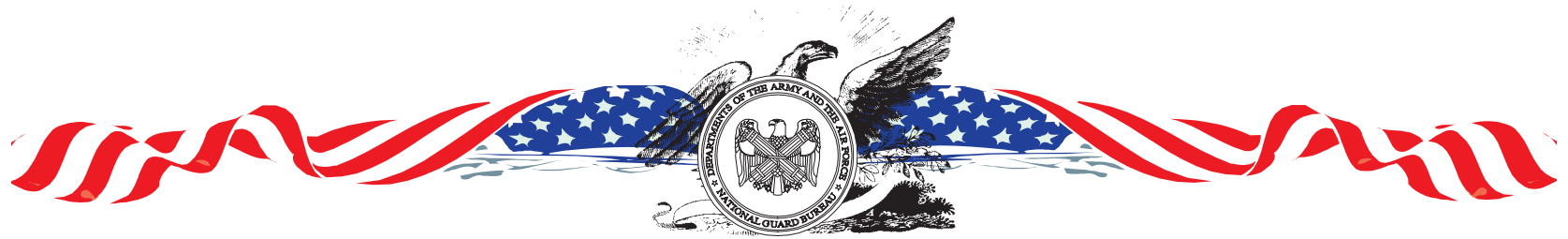
CW4 Doug Duguay and Sgt. Paul Croteau, posing at Camp Courage, Mosul Iraq. (Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Patrick Miller)



Staff Sgt. Jennings and Sgt. Sadosky at FOB Gabe, in Baqubah, Iraq. Jennings is the Medical Team Leader there with other members of the 141st Medical Company and Sadosky is on temporary assignment for 30 days while another member of the unit is home on R & R leave. The 141st Combat Medics are at Gabe providing medical treatment and evacuation to the soldiers in the 1/10 Field Artillery, an active duty unit under the 3rd Infantry Division from FT Benning, Georgia. (Photo courtesy Capt. Anne-Marie Garcia, 141st Medical, Commander)

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Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

VOL. 6 NO. 5

HARTFORD, CT

MAY 2005

Volunteer Appreciation Night recognizes those who give selflessly of themselves

OC CLAUDE HIBBERT
65TH PCH

The Connecticut National Guard Family Program Volunteer Appreciation Night was held April 20 at the Bond Ballroom in downtown Hartford. Mrs. Kimberley Hoffman Director of Connecticut National Guard Family Program hosted the event.

More than 120 volunteers and donors were present to mingle and discuss ways of reaching more families with improved programs and events. Volunteer leaders from Family Readiness Groups like Charlie Company 1-102nd Infantry, 118th Medical Battalion and the 143rd Area Support Group were present. Spc. David Nastri, an independent consultant who has personally raised more than \$10,000

worth of gift cards and cash for National Guard families was also present.

From the elegant setting guests could look over downtown Hartford, the Capitol building and the Hartford Armory. The historic Bond Ballroom, nce the largest space of its kind in the region, oasted a renovated décor and their famous thirty-foot ceilings.

At the end of the informal affair, Mrs. Kimberley Hoffman personally thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication to Family Program. The evening was concluded by two short slide presentations depicting the previous year's events and deployments.

Memorial Day a day for honoring our war dead

“On this Memorial Day, in gratitude for our country’s blessings, let each of us pause in a national moment of remembrance for America’s sons and daughters who gave the last full measure of devotion — to recall their hopes, their dreams, their valor. Let us be inspired by their selfless idealism and pledge ourselves anew to do our part to ensure the children of today and tomorrow will not have to share in their suffering and sacrifice.”

— Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, encouraging participation in the Memorial Day Moment of Remembrance, an act of national unity to honor America’s fallen.

All Americans, wherever they are, at 3 p.m. local time, Monday, May 30, should pause for a minute of reflection honoring those who died for our country. For more information, go to www.remember.gov.



Volunteers like those shown among the mountains of toys collected during 210004's Operation E.L.F., were honored by the Connecticut National Guard Family Support Program for all they have done and donated in the past year to help support the troops and their families. More than 120 volunteers attended the Volunteer Recognition Night held at the Bond Ballroom in Hartford. (Connecticut Guardian file photo)

*In grateful appreciation we
remember*

**Sgt Felix DelGreco
and
Spc. Robert Hoyt**

**Company C
102nd Infantry**

**In memory of their ultimate
sacrifice for the safety and
freedom of their country**



CATHERINE GALASSO

Need for mother is a need none of us ever outgrow

I keep them hidden in a dresser drawer. Even now, as I reach for them, tears begin to swell in my eyes;

there is a lump in my throat and my heartbeats faster. The letters now are quite faded, the envelopes worn, but her precious handwriting is as vibrant and alive as if she was with me here today.

Written that summer long ago, my mother sent me letters every day as I vacationed with a girlfriend and her family in California. "Ellen's mom called me and said you arrived OK," my mother wrote, "I was a nervous wreck all day. I kept thinking Catherine is up there flying and I am missing her already."

Mom wrote to me about the weather and what the family did that day in every little detail. Her letter ended with, "You take care, have a good time and see a lot... I miss you very much. I love you, mom."

The next day, another letter arrived, "We miss you, it is so quiet here," she wrote, telling me about all the family news.

"I can't wait to talk to you; everyone sends their love and have a wonderful time. Be good. I love you, Mom."

More letters arrived and at last it was time for me to return home. In her last letter she wrote, "It's a week today, I hope you had a good trip, can't wait to see you, I missed you, I love you, Mom."

I read between the lines and remember the countless sacrifices she made for me and my happiness.

Perhaps I never really understood it till now. I guess I never fully comprehended the depths of a mother's genuine love until today, as I hold my own precious daughters.

My mother's face was the first one that I recognized, her calming voice told me bedtime stories and her arms were the ones that rocked me to sleep. Though nearly twenty years have past since my mother went to heaven, I still see her sweet face and I will never forget.

Through adversity, mistakes and success, I've learned the worth of many things that are real, just and true. Of all

that I've experienced, I thank God and count one of my greatest treasures to be the memories of my dear mother.

A true mother's love: how rare, how sacred. Moms have played a great role in many of our deployments and our non-deployed Soldier's and Airmen's lives. And many of the women that have deployed are moms.

This Mother's day is a time to reflect on days past and an opportunity look to the future with renewed purpose.

A good mother is a dream-come-true for a child. Their love, loyalty, and deep caring give us a strong foundation for a contented and secure life. Behind every great man or woman there is a great mother, for greatness is formed from the cradle.

Let us give tribute to all the military mothers who have cared and shared the jewels of life's greatest character and brought up their children to know and serve God. We honor you and the valuable contributions that you make.

A mother's job is a difficult one with joys beyond compare. Mothers offer exhilaration, enthusiasm, appreciation and the most precious moments a child ever knows.

I paraphrased a quote that goes, "The father makes a living, but mother makes life worth living." So important are mothers.

Though we grow from child to adulthood, we never outgrow the need for someone special to comfort us, to stroke our hair gently, dry our tears and to reassure us that everything will be all right.

As I read and reread the letters my mother wrote to me I recall her tender words. And when our sweet Lauren Grace and Gabriella awaken in the morning, I say to them gently, "I hope you had a good nights sleep. I couldn't wait until you woke up to see you. I missed you. I love you."

The circle of life keeps flowing with the love of God and the wondrous joys of motherhood.

God bless you, dear mothers.

Write to Catherine Galasso-Vigorito, nationally syndicated columnist and author of "A New You, Words to Soothe the Body, Mind and Spirit," in care of Connecticut Guardian, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795 or e-mail her at anewyou@snet.net © Catherine Galasso, 2004

VA to hire 50 new OIF/OEF outreach counselors

VA NEWS RELEASE

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2005) — The Department of Veterans Affairs will hire 50 veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) to provide outreach services to veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. They will join 50 other OIF/OEF outreach counselors already hired by VA.

"How we care for our returning combat veterans will define VA for decades," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson.

The outreach counselors will brief servicemen and women leaving the military about VA benefits and services available to them and their family members. They will also encourage new veterans to use their local Vet Center as a point of entry to VA and its services.

"We believe that our outreach to veterans is most effective when the message is carried by their comrades," said Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health.

Outreach counselors visit military installations, coordinate with military family assistance centers and conduct one-on-one interviews with returning veterans and their families.

The new outreach counselors will be located in the 206 Vet Centers operated by VA throughout the country, especially near military out processing stations. They will be hired for a three-year period.

Vet Centers have been VA's first line of contact for troops returning from combat for every war since Vietnam. For 26 years, counselors have provided services for the psychological and social readjustment needs of combat veterans, and prevented possible development of more chronic and delayed forms of war-related trauma.

Vet Center employees have seen more than 16,000 of the 244,000 combat veterans VA estimates have left the service since the start of the Global War on Terrorism.

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GENERAL ADMISSION \$10 MILITARY PERSONNEL \$7

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toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil

TRICARE-eligible family members, whose sponsor dies while on active duty, continue to receive TRICARE benefits

MILITARY ONE-SOURCE

During the three years following a sponsor's death, surviving spouses and children under 21 years of age (23, if enrolled in a full-time course of study in an institution of higher learning) remain eligible for TRICARE Prime without enrollment fees and copayments.

Surviving family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime where offered, but lose eligibility for TRICARE Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members, if enrolled in that program at the time of the sponsor's death.

Surviving family members who are not enrolled in TRICARE Prime may use TRICARE Extra or Standard, but are subject to the appropriate active duty cost-shares and annual deductible requirements for each program.

During the three-year survivor benefit period, surviving family members are protected from having to pay out-of-pocket expenses of more than \$1,000 per fiscal year, for TRICARE allowable charges for covered services.

Surviving family members who are already enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) at the time of the service member's death remain eligible for dental care under the plan.

They pay no dental premiums during the three-year transitional survivor period. If surviving family members are not already enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program at the time of the service member's death, they are ineligible for the TDP, but may enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP).

Under the TRDP, enrollees are responsible for one hundred percent of the premium cost.

Surviving family members who choose to live outside the United States should check with the overseas TRICARE Service Center, as their benefits will differ slightly from those available in the United States.

At the end of the three-year survivor benefit period, eligible surviving family members' TRICARE coverage converts to that of retiree family members.

Eligible family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime where available, but must pay the same annual enrollment fees and copays as retiree family members.

Those who do not enroll in TRICARE Prime convert to retiree family member status under TRICARE Extra or Standard, with the appropriate deductible and cost-share requirements for each program.

Beneficiaries remain eligible for TRICARE pharmacy benefits and may enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program.

The out-of-pocket payment expenses for survivors in retiree family member status are limited to \$3,000 per fiscal year, for TRICARE allowable charges for covered services.

If the survivor reaches age 65 or is disabled and becomes entitled to Medicare Part A, they must purchase Medicare Part B to retain TRICARE coverage.

TRICARE survivor status ends if the surviving spouse remarries. Surviving spouse status can not be regained later, even if the surviving spouse later divorces or the new spouse dies.

It is extremely important for survivors to update their TRICARE eligibility in the Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System.

Surviving family members may go to the nearest Uniformed Services identification card facility www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/, or contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office Telephone Center at (800) 538-9552.

Surviving spouses must contact the ID card facility in advance to determine the range and scope of available services.

Family members who would like to obtain information regarding the loss of a loved one or coping with grief can find information on the Military One Source Web site at www.militaryonesource.com.



Date: May 21, 2005

Time: 6:30am-6:30pm the bus will be picking up the passengers at 6:30am in Newington, at the VA Hospital in the back parking lot. (555 Willard Ave, Newington CT 06111)

Cost: \$25.00 (non refundable)

Agenda: This bus trip has NO agenda!! Go shopping, see a Broadway show, or visit with friends.

To RSVP please call (860)527-4866 or (860)878-6746.

Reservations confirmed upon receipt of payment.

Checks can be made out to Family Program Special Projects.

Please send to:

Michelle McCarty Family Program Office 360 Broad St
Hartford, CT 06105

All proceeds will benefit the CT National Guard Family Program Youth Program.

For
deployment-related
questions call

1-800-858-2677



Visit the
Connecticut Guardian
on-line at www.ct.ngb.army.mil



Family Assistance Center locations

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Waterbury Armory
64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-2406 Toll Free 866-347-2291
Staff Sgt. Jonathan Duffy

Norwich Armory
38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360
(860) 823-1342 Ext. 12 Toll Free 866-347-3357
Mrs. Andrea Lathrop

Manchester Armory & AVCRAD
330 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0780 Toll Free 866-347-2286 Capt. Lauri Tinelle

103rd Air Control Squadron
206 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477
(203) 795-2983 Charlie and Jane Solomon

103rd FW, Bradley ANG Base
Bldg 8, East Granby, CT 06026
(860) 292-2730 Mrs. Donna Rivera

Newington
555 Willard Ave., Bldg. 1, 4th Floor, Newington, CT 06111
Ms. Melissa Tetro & Sgt. Tamara Jex

Hartford Armory
360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795
1-800-858-2677
Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Mrs. Michelle McCarty, Mrs. Karen Somes,
OC Claude Hibbert, Mrs. Trudy Kaufman and Sgt. Jessica McKenna

Volunteers are needed in each facility.
Those wishing to help out can contact Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family
Program Manager at 1-800-858-2677.

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following email address: kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil
Please visit our Website at www.ct.ngb.army.mil/family



State Name Word Search

S S R W N R K A B J L C O A O M C Y H A W A I I T
A O B H C O N S A O A C S T I B I G S W N M H I U
X U I W O O R K E L T Y I L K N B C Z J Z A F N C
E T E K Z D S T I M H L B G Y Q I F H V P B A D I
T H K I M A E F H A M O H A L K O G B I R A P I T
N C R G L J O I Z C N I I A X T N C R U G L A A C
F A N A X R M A S S A C H U S E T T S I B A G N E
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K V U B X A H E N W I R E A S N U R E V N L N O M
O A I J V V G T H S A J A A I T T G E N S I N U O
T B N M S O A A S S W O S W N N T E E V I Q I R Y
A P X S N N M I K E X Z N E A X I Z N O N A M I W
Q B R Q A P M A N F B Y K H X L Y G J N R Y M N W
T Z F P S S O T R E W T W J M R E H R Q E G Z G K
H S O H J T F O Y J P X V G R A V D V I I S I R N
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Kids' Creative Corner

A MONTHLY FEATURE OF
FUN AND EDUCATIONAL
ACTIVITIES

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| ALABAMA | INDIANA | NEBRASKA | RHODE ISLAND |
| ALASKA | IOWA | NEVADA | SOUTH CAROLINA |
| ARIZONA | KANSAS | NEW HAMPSHIRE | SOUTH DAKOTA |
| ARKANSAS | KENTUCKY | NEW JERSEY | TENNESSEE |
| CALIFORNIA | LOUISIANA | NEW MEXICO | TEXAS |
| COLORADO | MAINE | NEW YORK | UTAH |
| CONNECTICUT | MARYLAND | NORTH CAROLINA | VERMONT |
| DELAWARE | MASSACHUSETTS | NORTH DAKOTA | VIRGINIA |
| FLORIDA | MICHIGAN | OHIO | WASHINGTON |
| GEORGIA | MINNESOTA | OKLAHOMA | WEST VIRGINIA |
| HAWAII | MISSISSIPPI | OREGON | WISCONSIN |
| IDAHO | MISSOURI | PENNSYLVANIA | WYOMING |
| ILLINOIS | MONTANA | | |